

✧ Renee's Garden ✧

Your Garden To Table Seed Company

DAFFODIL GROWING AND CARE GUIDE

ON ARRIVAL: keep bulbs cool and dry with good air circulation.

Until you plant your bulbs, store them in a cool, dry spot (50°F to 70°F) with good air circulation and low humidity, away from heat, frost and strong sunlight. Poor storage conditions can result in bulbs dried out or rotted bulbs.

Daffodils are living, breathing and perishable and must be planted in the fall they are received.

Where to Plant

Planting your bulbs in cool fall weather, once the weather and soil have cooled down into the 50-55° F. range, and it is definitely “sweater weather” outside. The soil needs to have cooled off, but the ground should still be workable. Plan on September, ideally after the first killing frost, in cold winter climates, and early through late November in mild winter climates.

Pick a sunny spot or one with just partial or filtered shade. The most important element is good drainage! Daffodils will simply not thrive unless they have good drainage, so be extra sure your location does not puddle after it rains.

For best most natural effect, plant your bulbs in groups or curves, not in straight lines. Use shrubs and trees as a backdrop for your bulbs which adds a pretty vertical dimension when they are blooming. If you have limited space, plant in containers; daffodils will grow well in pots. (See Growing In Pots section)

Planting

Dig out your bed or dig individual holes at least 6 to 8 inches deep, because you want to plant bulbs 2 to 3 times deeper than the bulb is tall, with their pointed tops pointing up. (Daffodils establish best and bloom for multiple seasons when planted 2 or 3 times the height of the bulb. The soil pressure actually helps keep the bulb from splitting up too readily. If planted too shallowly, you'll end up with clumps of smaller bulbs and fewer, smaller flowers.)

Plant bulbs 4 to 5 per square foot, allowing 5 inches from the center of one bulb to the center of the next which will give your bulbs enough room to naturalize and multiply for many seasons of bloom.

After planting, water the bulbs in well to settle the soil around them. Add a few inches of mulch. Roots will form in autumn and buds and flowers will follow the next spring. Keep daffodils watered during active growth and after bloom while they are storing up food for the next season.

Fertilizing

If planting in unimproved soil, you can fertilize Narcissus plantings with organic granular flower fertilizer (4-10-6 is ideal) at a rate of about one teaspoon per bulb 3 times a year:

First, top dress by sprinkling directly on the soil in the fall after bloom to promote root growth. *Second*, fertilize in the spring when the sprouts emerge. *Third*, fertilize when blooms finish to nourish the bulbs as they store nutrients for next season's growth. If there is a prolonged dry period after fertilizing, water it in lightly. Do not add fertilizer directly to the planting hole as this can cause root burn.

Flowering, Picking & Aftercare

Your daffodils will flower in succession, as your mix contains early mid and late blooming types. Feel free to pick the daffodil flowers for bouquets as this will not hurt the bulbs. Pick them by reaching down to the base of the stem and snap it off. You'll get a longer stem with the solid white part at the end that soaks up water and holds it.

Remember that daffodil sap contains a substance which causes other flowers in the same vase to wilt, so don't mix them with other flowers for arrangements.

After the flowers are finished blooming, let the foliage die back naturally so it can mature and photosynthesize.

Continues over

to feed the bulb for the next season. By late spring or early summer, when the foliage yellows and dies back, the bulbs go dormant and you can remove the dead foliage. Your bulbs will go through a resting period throughout summer and early autumn, then begin their next growing cycle when the weather cools down again. Daffodils can be left undisturbed to naturalize for years.

If you need to transplant your bulbs for any reason, wait until they are finished blooming and foliage has died back. Dig up bulbs and replant them right away or store in a cool, airy place.

Growing in Large Pots or Half Barrels

Daffodil bulbs will grow well in any large container at least 12 to 18 inches in diameter and 18 inches deep, with adequate drain holes. Fill it with good quality, well-drained potting mix; daffodil bulbs must never sit in water logged soil or they will rot.

Locate your daffodil pots where they will get full sun for all or most of the day. For container plantings in zone 5 and colder, after daffodils are finished blooming and foliage dies back, you can overwinter pots in an unheated garage to moderate the effects of the temperature swings between sunny winter days and frigid nights. Bring the pots outside in late February or March for the next seasons blooms.

