

DAFFODILS/NARCISSUS

Daffodils are hardy bulbs. They are native to Western Europe, the Mediterranean and Western Asia. There is a wide variation in leaf size and shape, flower shapes, plant heights, and the number of flowers produced per bulb. There are daffodils for rock gardens, borders, perennial beds and naturalizing in woods. Use a well drained, composted site. Plant bulbs outdoors so that soil is 4-6" above the bulb nose. Use 40-100 bulbs per square yard - space bulbs about 3-6" apart. Exact spacing and planting depth depends on the bulb size. For indoor forcing, plant bulbs at soil level.

Valentine and Easter Forcing

Availability

Daffodils/narcissi are available early September through mid-December.

"Precooled" daffodils/narcissi are available mid-October through early November.

Storage After Arrival

Unpack bulbs immediately upon arrival - ventilate if not planted immediately. Store at 58-65^oF - do not store with fresh fruit, vegetables or other ethylene producing products.

Planting Medium

Any commercial soil or soil mix can be used as long as it has good drainage and allows for undisturbed root growth. Soil pH level should be 6-7 and should have a low soluble salt level. The following soil mixes have shown the best results: Fafard #2, Fafard #3-B, Fafard #4, Metro 350, Metro 360, Metro 500, and Fison Sunshine #4.

Cooling

This is the most important step and can be done according to various methods:

For Valentine

1. Plant bulbs immediately upon arrival (approx. mid-September) in pots or flats. Place in cooler at 48^oF. Bring into greenhouse January 5-10.
2. Dry precool bulbs (not planted) at 48^oF until mid-October in pots or flats and continue cooling at 48^oF. Bring into greenhouse January 5.
3. Obtain "precooled" bulbs, plant in pots or flats approximately mid-October and continue cooling at 48^oF. Bring into greenhouse January 5.

For Easter

After planting keep bulbs at 48^oF until the roots grow out of the bottom of the container. When the roots show, drop the temperature to 41^oF. Maintain this temperature until early January at which time, depending on sprout development, the temperature needs to be lowered to 34^oF and held until brought into the greenhouse. If no cooler facility is available, the bulbs can be planted outside under a 6" layer of sand and straw cover. This method is only recommended in the Northern states where outside soil temperature is cold enough to make it possible to do this.

Greenhouse Forcing

For Valentine - start in greenhouse January 10, grow at 58-65^oF.

For Easter - start in greenhouse 4 weeks before Easter, grow at 58-65^oF.

Watering

Water every other day. Always make sure that watering is done directly into the container and over the crop.

Fertilizer

Fertilize in the greenhouse only - not in the cooler. Use calcium nitrate at a rate of 2 lbs per 100 gallons of water.

Height Control

Generally this is not a concern for Valentine forcing, however, for Easter a spray application of Florel or Pistill may be needed to control height. See Holland Bulb Forcers Guide for details and application rates.