

Daffodils *Narcissus* species



Bloom: March - April

Daffodils have been popular garden flowers for hundreds of years. The Roman scholar Pliny claimed narcissus was derived from the Greek word 'narkao,' meaning to be numb and associated with the plant's narcotic properties.



Plant History and Habits

Daffodils contain sharp crystals [calcium oxylate] that prevent animals from eating the plant, but also cause irritation. In a vase of mixed flowers, these crystals in the daffodils will soon make the other blossoms wilt" (Wells, 53-4).

Origins

Daffodils are native to the Mediterranean.

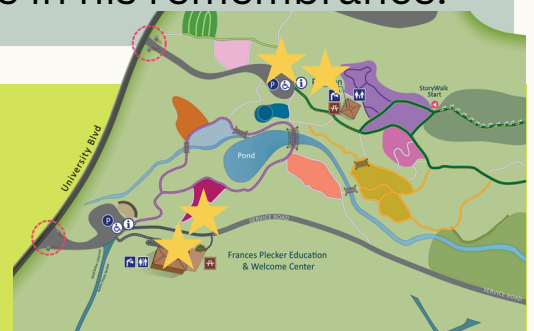
Folklore



In Greek mythology, the flower was a symbol of unrequited love. Narcissus was a famously good-looking hunter, but highly self-absorbed and proud. He disdained those who loved him. The goddess of retribution, Nemesis, lured Narcissus to a pool where he saw his own reflection in the waters and fell in love with it, not realizing it was only a reflection. Unable to leave the beauty of his reflection, Narcissus starved to death—or fell in and drowned, in other versions. Daffodils grew from the place in his remembrance.

Where is it?

Many volunteers have planted *Narcissus* species throughout the Arboretum over the years. One prominent location to look is the "April Walk" next to the At Home in the Woods Family Garden.



More on Daffodils

Narcissus species

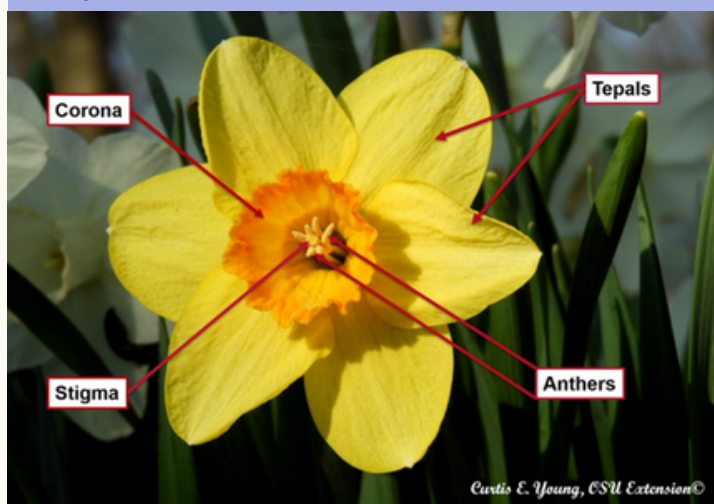
Other common names around the world: daffydowndilly; daffydilly; dillydaffs; giggary; gyfinog; gooseflop; gracie daisies; lent lily; lenty cups.

Highly Cultivated

There are more than 40 species of daffodils, and over 32,000 cultivars. These are divided into 13 categories based on the flower's anatomy:

Anatomy

When petals and sepals look similar, they are called 'tepals.'



1. Trumpet
2. Large-cupped
3. Small-cupped
4. Doubles –double-cupped
5. Triandrus --drooping
6. Cyclamineus –backward flared petals
7. Jonquils –tubular rush-like leaves
8. Tazettas –multiple blooms per stem
9. Poeticus –a rimmed eye
10. Bulbocodium –lampshade trumpets
11. Split-cupped
12. Miscellaneous
13. Known by botanical name—wild

What's in a Name?

“The difference in meaning between the names of daffodils, narcissi, and jonquils is still unclear, but we seem to agree that all daffodils are narcissi, though not all narcissi are daffodils, and it has to do with length of trumpet and numbers of flowers per stem” (Wells, 53).



An example of type #2, 'Desdemona' cultivar is in the Viette Perennial Garden.



An example of #7 jonquil-type, 'Quail' in the Viette perennial garden has longer rush-like leaves.



An example of #6, *Narcissus cyclamineus*, 'February gold' bloom along the pond parking lot in late February and early March.