

The Magnolia Chronicle

Pulaski County Master Gardener Newsletter

President's Report

February 2021

Wow! It's hard to believe that January is already gone. We have had a pretty mild winter so far. I have petunias that haven't frozen out...yet.

Admittedly, they are not blooming and aren't beautiful but they are alive! I'll see if I can keep them going until spring. Will keep you posted.

This is a good time to start forcing blooms. I will try my tulip magnolia again this year and of course forsythia is also one that you can try. There are others as well. It always feels like a touch of spring that brightens up the house.

Mid February is the time to prune your roses back and I have already started to cut the liriopse. And if you want to take the easier way, you can always get some tulips or daffodils at the nursery to brighten your rooms.

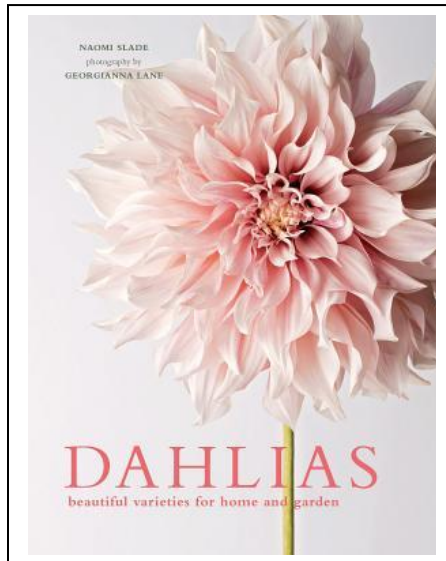
I hope you are all working on your covid vaccine. The sooner we get vaccinated, the sooner we will be able to get together again. So stay healthy, eat healthy and continue to practice social distancing, hand washing and wearing your mask. The good news is no mask when you are working in your own yard. Happy Gardening!!

Sharon Priest,
PCMG President

In this issue:

President's Report.....	1
Book review.....	2
Gardening Calendar.....	3-4
Food for thought.....	5
Daffodils.....	6-8
Purple/blue collage.....	9





Dahlias: Beautiful Varieties for Home & Garden

Author: Naomi Slade

Photography: Georgianna Lane

Book Review: Debra Redding

The dahlia is a fabulous cutting flower for the home garden. Cut one bloom, and ten more appear on the plant.

Blooming late summer to the first frost of autumn, this native of Mexico provides explosions of color in home gardens. The author's commentary unearths the dahlia from its Aztec origins and imparts practical, hands-on knowledge for growing and overwintering these tropical plants in wintry climates. Including classics like Café au Lait and lesser-known varieties like Voodoo and Honka, readers will discover a stunning range of specimens from tiny pompoms to heavy-headed dinner plates, to those that resemble daisies, sea anemones, and even fireworks!

Naomi Slade is a well-known journalist and photographer specializing in gardening, environment, and lifestyle. A biologist by training, naturalist by inclination, and with a lifelong love of plants, she contributes regularly to a range of British publications including *The English Garden* and *House and Garden*, and appears on TV and radio.

Georgianna Lane is a leading floral, garden and travel photographer whose work has been widely published. Her work has featured in *BBC Gardens Illustrated*, *Gardener's World*, *Romantic Homes* and *Victoria*. Visit her blog at georgiannalane.com, which chronicles her styled floral photo shoots and more.

GARDENING CHECKLIST FOR FEBRUARY

Carol Randle

TILLER TIME

Put out asparagus crowns and strawberry plants as soon as the soil is workable. Outdoors, sow broccoli, cabbage, onion sets, English peas and seed potatoes. Place orders for seeds early to ensure availability.

BIRD HELP

Provide fresh water near the birds' shelter. To attract a variety of birds, feed them cornmeal mixed with peanut butter, cracked corn, doughnuts, chopped fruits, suet, or sunflower seeds. Or plant barberry, beautyberry, coralberry, cottoneaster, hawthorn, holly, mahonia, possum haw and viburnum, which all provide fruits and berries in a February landscape.

GET RID OF BUGS

Use insecticidal soap to control aphids on cool season annuals and vegetable plants. For borers mites, aphids or scale, apply dormant oil spray to trees and shrubs, both evergreen and deciduous, roses and the perennial border. The most effective spray of the year is before leaf buds start emerging. Check the label for optimum temperature conditions. (Usually on a calm day when the temperature is expected to be above 40 degrees for three days and no rain is expected for 24 hours.) Spraying plants before leaf buds open also avoids burning them. Note: Do not use oil spray on sugar or Japanese maple, walnut, beech or magnolia trees.

DOGWOODS

February is the best time to plant dogwoods, Pick an elevated site with soil on the acid side. Plant ball and burlap trees and shrubs and bare-root plant material that are still dormant. Soak the roots in water overnight before planting. If you cannot plant right away, cover the roots with moist soil or compost and store in shady location. For new planting sites, test soil to determine the proper amendments. For existing sites, amend the entire area with mulch, compost, etc.

LAWNS

Apply lime to lawns if not done in December or January. Fertilize trees with a high nitrogen fertilizer, if not done in January.

SHOOTS

Prune back by one-third to one-half tropical bloomers that are over-wintering indoors. Apply a slow release fertilizer to annuals and over-wintering tropical plants at the rate recommended on the label. Prune undesirable limbs and tip terminals on fruit trees and grapevines and thin out crowded shoots. Leave some branches of fruit trees and grapevines and thin out crowded shoots. Remove older canes of blueberry plants. Cut back lateral branches of blackberries to one foot.



L-pink dogwood
R-Kousa
Japanese
dogwood



SHRUBS

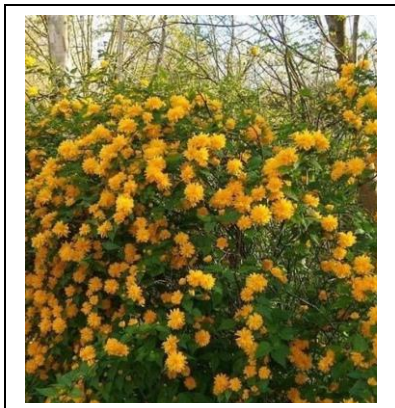
PLEASE DO NOT COMMIT CRAPE MYRTLE MURDER!

Cut back dwarf crape myrtles to within six inches of the ground. Only prune back larger crape myrtle shrubs if needed to maintain size, or to remove suckers. Thin tree forms of crape myrtles every 3-5 years. **ANNUAL PRUNING OF THIS TREE DESTROYS ITS NATURAL APPEARANCE AND IS NOT NEEDED.**

Remove largest third of buddleia, hydrangea, nandina and spirea canes. Remove dead wood and branches that turn in or overlap in the center of broadleaf evergreens. Wherever the plant is cut, it will thicken, so prune above a twig growing outward not above a leaf bud. **DO NOT PRUNE FORSYTHIA OR FLOWERING QUINCE UNTIL AFTER BLOOM.** Plant hardwood cuttings of shrubs (8" with at least two buds underground) in a cold frame.

FEBRUARY BLOOMS

Flowering almond (upper right), anise Florida (upper left), arum (lower middle), bridal veil, camellia, crocus, daffodil, dogwood, forsythia, hellebores, hyacinth, iris (stylas and reticulatas), Carolina jasmine, kerria (lower left), loropetalum, oriental magnolia, muscari, pansies, phlox, primrose, pussy willow, quince, redbud, scilla sibirica, snowdrops, spiraea thunbergii (lower right), viola and violet are in bloom this month.



Food for thought:

Since succulent bowls are so popular right, try a new spin on it with a seashell!

Seashells are like succulents, and they come in all sizes,

Send in your food for thought for our next newsletter....Debra Redding



Daffodils for Arkansas By Rambling Rose

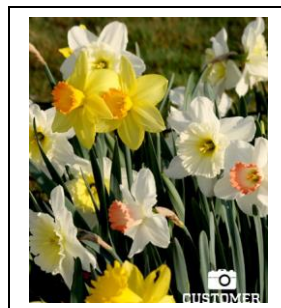
Daffodil season has already started in Arkansas! Their warm, colorful blooms will cheer us all up during the next months. Daffodils usually begin blooming for us in Arkansas by mid January and last until mid April. There are 13 divisions of daffodils according to the American Daffodil Society (see information below). By planting different divisions of daffodils and a variety of daffodils you will be insured a nice warm and happy plant to enjoy in your garden or cut and bring inside for viewing. Their blooms last about a week or more in a vase! If you have noticed – yellow is not the only color of daffodil. We can purchase daffodils that are all white, all pink, yellow/white, orange/white, pink/yellow, red/yellow, and so forth. They can really perk up your early spring garden with their colorful blooms.

Unfortunately, not ALL 13 divisions do well for us in Arkansas. Many people call almost any small yellow daffodil a jonquil. However, jonquils are a particular class of daffodils descended from the species *Narcissus jonquilla*. This group of daffodils typically has small, yellow flowers held in clusters of two to six sweetly fragrant blooms per stem and slender rush-like leaves. Excellent jonquil cultivars for Arkansas are: ‘Bell Song’, ‘Pipit’, ‘Quail’, ‘Sundial’ and ‘Sweetness’. I have been growing ‘Quail’ for several years in my small garden. It is a late bloomer and hasn’t multiplied too much.

Tazetta daffodils: Many people call this group of daffodils “narcissus”, although properly that name refers to all daffodils. Tazettas bloom prolifically with tight clusters of four to eight or more small flowers in mid to late winter. Most have a very intense fragrance. ‘Avalanche’, ‘Cragford’, ‘Erlicheer’ and ‘Geranium’ are all excellent for our climate.

Miniatures are also a favorite of our southern gardens. Most people grow ‘tete-a-tete’ in their gardens. It is a prolific multiplier and is so easy to grow and dig and divide after blooming. Species daffodils are another favorite of our old southern gardens. These are the ones you see blooming in old homesteads. ‘*N jonquilla*’, ‘*N gracilis*’ and double and single ‘Campernelle’ are all great for us to plant and continue to grow.

The large flowered daffodils (trumpets, large cups, and small cups) are also another group that will perform consistently well for us. ‘Accent’, ‘Barret Browning’, ‘Carlton’, ‘Ceylon’, ‘Fortune’, ‘Gigantic Star’, ‘Ice Follies’, ‘Mount Hood’, and ‘Scarlet O’Hara’ will all do well for us. There are a few split coronas (Division 11a) that perform well for our climate: ‘Cassata’, ‘Moondragon’, and ‘Lemon Beauty’. Good varieties for Division 6 (Cyclamineus) are: ‘Beryl’, ‘Jetfire’, and ‘Larkwhistle’.. I have been growing ‘Tweety bird’ for several years. It caught my eye at the National American Daffodil Society Meeting that was held in Arkansas several years ago. I thought the name was so cute and the flower very different. Double varieties haven’t survived very well in my garden. ‘Tahiti’ is a very popular large double with yellow and orange coloring. ‘Sir Winston Churchill’ is another variety that has small double blooms and very fragrant.



L- ‘Ice Follies’
M – ‘Mt. Hood’
R-mixed varieties

As with all daffodils, and especially the larger varieties, they should be dug and divided at least every three to four years to maintain vigorous blooming. Daffodil bulbs also perform well if they are fertilized while they are “greening up” in the springtime. Fertilize with a 10-10-20 mixture and they will perform much better. Also, don’t forget that bulbs as a rule do not like to be wet for a long period of time. Good drainage is essential for daffodils. They can be planted under trees and as long as they receive about one inch of water per week in the winter – they will be happy. They will not compete with the tree roots during the summer because they are dormant and require no care during the summer months, and of course, don’t need water during that period of time. Don’t forget the general rule for daffodils – leave the “leaves” on the plant for at least six weeks after blooming. DO NOT braid them, cut them or twist them. If you don’t like the yellowing leaves – plant some daylilies, other perennials, or summer annuals to camouflage the leaves.

According to the American Daffodil Society (www.daffodilusa.org) there are thirteen descriptive divisions of daffodils. Miniatures have the same descriptive divisions as standards, only with smaller blooms, usually less than 2 inches (50mm) in diameter.

Division 1 – Trumpet Daffodils: One flower to a stem; corona (“trumpet”) as long as, or longer than the perianth segments (“petals”).

Division 2 – Large-Cupped Daffodils: One flower to a stem; corona (“cup”) more than one-third, but less than equal to the length of the perianth segments (“petals”).

Division 3 – Small-Cupped Daffodils: One flower to a stem; corona (“cup”) not more than one-third the length of the perianth segments (“petals”).

Division 4 – Double Daffodils: One or more flowers to a stem, with doubling of the perianth segments or the corona or both.

Division 5 – Triandrus Daffodils: Characteristics of *N. triandrus* clearly evident: usually two or more pendent flowers to a stem; perianth segments reflexed.

Division 6 – Cyclamineus Daffodils: Characteristics of *N. cyclamineus* clearly evident: one flower to a stem; perianth segments significantly reflexed; flower at an acute angle to the stem, with a very short pedicel (“neck”).

Division 7 – Jonquilla Daffodils: Characteristics of Sections Jonquilla or Apodanthi clearly evident: one to five (rarely eight) flowers to a stem; perianth segments spreading or reflexed; corona cup-shaped, funnel-shaped or flared, usually wider than long; flowers usually fragrant.

Division 8 – Tazetta Daffodils: Characteristics of Section Tazettae clearly evident: usually three to twenty flowers to a stout stem; perianth segments spreading not reflexed; flowers usually fragrant.

Division 9 – Poeticus Daffodils: Characteristics of *N. poeticus* and related species clearly evident; perianth segments pure white; corona very short or disc-shaped, not more than one-fifth the length of the perianth segments; corona usually with a green and/or yellow center and red rim, but sometimes wholly or partly of other colors; anthers usually set at two distinct levels; flowers are fragrant

Division 10 – Bulbocodium Hybrids: Characteristics of Section Bulbocodium clearly evident: usually one flower to a stem; perianth segments insignificant compared with the dominant corona; anthers dorsifixed (i.e. attached more or less centrally to the filament); filament and style usually curved.

Division 11a – Split-Cupped *Collar* Daffodils: Split-corona daffodils with the corona segments opposite the perianth segments; the corona segments usually in two whorls of three.

Division 11b – Split-Cupped *Papillon* Daffodils: Split-corona daffodils with the corona segments alternate to the perianth segments; the corona segments usually in a single whorl of six.

Division 12 – Other Daffodil Cultivars: Consists of daffodils not falling into any of the previous categories. Many are inter-division hybrids.

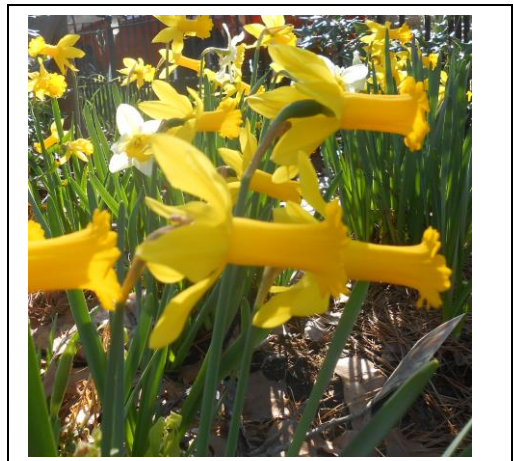
Division 13 – Daffodils distinguished solely by Botanical Name: Consists of the Species, Wild Variants, and Wild Hybrids found in natural daffodils.

Miniature Daffodil: Miniatures have the same descriptive divisions as standards, only with smaller blooms, usually less than 2 inches (50mm) in diameter.



Top L-
'Campernelle'
Top R- 'Scarlet
O'hara'

Bottom L-
'Tahiti'
Bottom R-
'Tweety bird'





Purple/blue collage by Jeffrey McKinley. Enjoy!!

University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.