



Growing Daffodils

Great for Colorado Gardens!

Daffodils are one of the easiest plants to grow. Few insects bother them, and rodents that feast on other bulbs won't eat daffodil bulbs. Deer, which eat almost anything, won't touch a daffodil. Daffodils are available in a range of colors, sizes, flower shapes and blooming times. They make terrific cut flowers.

Choosing Bulbs

Choose bulbs that are large for their species, and feel heavy, firm, and dry. Larger bulbs cost more but reward with larger blooms and more of them. Although most varieties of daffodils are chosen for their color, paying attention to blooming times and size will ensure selection of the ideal variety for your garden.

Planting Daffodil Bulbs

Plant bulbs when the daytime temperatures are 60 degrees Fahrenheit or below. In the Denver area this normally occurs around late October. You can continue to plant until the ground freezes.

The best location for planting daffodils is a spot that gets lots of sun and a bit of light shade during the spring months. They do not do well under evergreen trees (too much shade) or shrubs (too much competition for water). They can do well under deciduous trees that haven't leafed out yet when the daffodils bloom. For best effect, plant bulbs in clumps or large swaths.

Daffodils like a well-drained loam. Use compost to amend sandy or clay soil. A rule of thumb for planting daffodil bulbs is to put them at a depth of three times the height of the bulb. For a two inch bulb the bottom of the hole should be six inches from the ground surface. You should have at least 6 inches of loose, good soil below the bulbs to allow proper root growth.

Water and Fertilizer

You can add fertilizer when you plant, or, if you have prepared the soil well, just cover the bulbs with soil, water them well to get the roots started, then mulch. In general, daffodils have light water requirements during the fall and winter, heavy requirements during the March – May growing season, and no need for water during the summer dormant period.

Once your daffodils are done blooming, they need to continue growing in order to store food for the next year. You must leave the foliage alone after flowering is done—don't cut off the leaves until they turn yellow and fall over. This may take 8 to 10 weeks. Planting other plants, such as day lilies, in front of daffodils may effectively hide the yellowing foliage from view.

In the fall when temperatures get down to 60 degrees again, fertilize your daffodils by top dressing. This will replace the nutrients in the soil that were used up in the last growth and blooming period. If you don't fertilize in the fall, it is fine to fertilize in the spring as the first green daffodil shoots emerge. Choose a fertilizer formulated especially for bulbs.