

Southern Daffodils

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Growing conditions in the south are tough on many daffodils— hot, humid summers coupled with wet winters can rot all but the toughest ones. Our early springs allow us to have daffodils blooming in January and February, and cool temperatures at those times enable them to stay in bloom for weeks. Early bloomers are the best choice for the south as they have enough time before the heat of late spring sets in to replenish their food supply for the following year.

Many daffodils have managed to thrive in our climate, and countless varieties have been shared and passed down by generations of gardeners. Some have been growing here for over one hundred years, and can still be seen blooming each spring at long abandoned farms or providing a bright patch of yellow along country roads.

Trumpets are the most common daffodils grown in this country, but only a few of the earliest blooming varieties will thrive here. Try ‘Golden Spur’ (gold) *N. pseudonarcissus* (also called Lent Lily -- yellow with a gold cup) or ‘Rijnveld’s Early Sensation’ (gold).

Some large cup daffodils perform very well here, and bloom from early to mid-spring. ‘Ice Follies’ (white with a yellow cup) is probably the most popular southern daffodil, but also try *N. x incomparabilis* ‘Lucifer’ (pale yellow with an orange cup), ‘Accent’ (white with a pink cup) and ‘Carleton’ (yellow with a deep yellow cup).

Do you garden on heavy clay soil? Try some of the jonquil hybrids like *N. x odorus* (also called “Campernelle”- yellow with twisted petals), ‘Sweetness’ (gold), ‘Quail’ (dark yellow), or ‘Trevithian’ (yellow). These varieties have slender, rounded leaves and sweetly-scented flowers.

Paperwhites are the best known members of the tazetta group. These varieties have many sweetly fragrant flowers on each stem. Try ‘Canaliculatus’, a tiny variety that tops out at only four to six inches, or ‘Avalanche’, which may also be found as ‘Seventeen Sisters’, named for the 15 to 20 flowers found on each 16 to 18 inch stem. Both varieties have white petals with yellow cups.

One of my favorite daffodils is ‘Hawera’, a miniature triandrus variety that reaches only five to six inches in height and blooms over a long period in late spring. Its flowers are a soft butter yellow color, and there are often three or more of them per stem. Another miniature daffodil to try is the hoop petticoat, *N. bulbicodium* var. *conspicuous*, which has unique, all yellow flowers consisting of huge, megaphone-shaped cups and tiny petals.

Now is the best time to plant daffodils. For more information on planting bulbs, bulb care and additional varieties, see HGIC 1155, *Spring Flowering Bulbs*. This factsheet is available on our website (<http://hgic.clemson.edu>) or by calling our toll-free number (1-888-656-9988).