



Bulb Gardening



News and advice for better gardening

Newsletter no. 14

CARE FOR POTS!

One of the most common things we hear from visitors at the Garden Shows is "Gosh! I never realised that there are so many daffodils", but with some 25,000 registered varieties, to know them all intimately is a bit beyond human experience!

Another thing we commonly hear from people is that they have trouble getting their bulbs to continue to flower well in pots. Quality bulbs will always give a wonderful display for at least one season, as the flower bud is already formed in the bulb. To keep the bulbs up to flowering size (bonsai bulbs don't flower) and achieve good flowering in subsequent seasons requires more work and TLC.



1st year - lots of flowers



2nd year - only 1 flower

One important consideration is why grow in pots at all? If it is for effect to achieve that "Wow" factor with a pot full of gorgeous blooms, we often over-plant the bulbs in rather small containers. The bulbs become crowded and competition is fierce for resources, including space, water, light and nutrients, so we cannot really expect as good a display the following

season. In this case, it is best to rest the bulbs in the garden the following year and re-pot with new bulbs.

If however, bulbs are being grown permanently in pots, remember that as they have to do all their annual growing in a very short time we need to optimise conditions for them. Always use a top-quality potting mix that conforms to the Australian Standard (red tick logo on packaging), plant in deep pots, use a slow-release bulb fertiliser, keep moist but not water-logged for as long as the leaves are green, do not overcrowd, grow in a sunny spot and re-pot regularly.

Daffodils are generally easier to grow in the garden in the long term, but can be grown successfully in pots if you are willing to give them the attention they need.

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Gamblers Pot Luck



At the end of the despatch season (April) we often have small quantities of bulbs packaged up. We offer these bulbs at half-price to people who are happy to take Pot-luck.

We make up packages of at least \$70 worth which are available for \$35 post free. The packages generally contain a wide variety of bulbs as well as some daffodils.

To order, simply add to your order;

Gamblers Pot-Luck \$35



Caring for the farm

This Winter we started the restoration of an area along Menzies Creek that was so thoroughly cleared there was very little native vegetation remaining. We fenced and planted out 500 indigenous trees, shrub and grasses.

Most exciting is the recent visit of a male lyrebird. Lyrebirds have been extinct in the Menzies Creek valley for many generations.



This Winter's plantings



FERTILISER TRIALS FOR DAFFODILS

This is an article from the Victorian Daffodil Society Newsletter no.15 June 2008 by former president Greg Parks.

“When I started to grow daffodils the late Mrs Eve Murray advised me to never use animal manures as they would destroy the bulbs. In 1998 with the help of Doug Bryce I decided to do a trial plot. The Australian Daffodil Society supplied the bulbs of ‘Snowflake’ for the trial.

The bulbs were counted and weighed, each lot consisted of 26 bulbs and was of approximately the same weight. Each lot of bulbs was then planted using the selected fertilisers.

All lots were treated the same for four years and they were dug in 2002. The following table of results show that Mrs Murray’s advice was correct. I hope that growers will get some help from the results of these trials.”

| Fertiliser Type | No. of Bulbs | Increase | Bulb Size |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Super 1 | 226 | 8.69 | L,M,S |
| Super 2 | 223 | 8.58 | L,M,S |
| Super & Potash 1 | 258 | 9.92 | L,M |
| Super & Potash 2 | 236 | 9.46 | L,M |
| Potash 1 | 246 | 9.45 | L,M |
| Potash 2 | 286 | 11.0 | L,M,S |
| Nitrophoska 1 | 253 | 9.73 | L,M |
| Nitrophoska 2 | 260 | 10.0 | L,M |
| Osmocote Plus 1 | 226 | 8.69 | L,M |
| Osmocote Plus 2 | 206 | 7.93 | L,M |
| Complete 1 | 184 | 7.08 | L,M |
| Complete 2 | 180 | 6.92 | L,M |
| Super/Lime Potash 1 | 172 | 6.62 | |
| Super/Lime Potash 2 | 167 | 6.42 | L,M |
| Super/Iron 1 | 157 | 6.04 | L,M,S |
| Super/Iron 2 | 100 | 3.85 | L |
| Cow manure | 60 | 2.30 | L |
| Horse manure | 67 | 2.57 | L |
| Dynamic Lifter | 90 | 3.47 | L |
| Blood & Bone | 76 | 2.93 | L |
| Lime 1 | 85 | 3.30 | L |
| Lime 2 | 101 | 3.89 | L |
| Totals (572 bulbs) | 3,859 | 6.74 | |

OUR COMMENTS

This trial seems to have been well designed with replicates of most fertiliser types. The results shown are obviously for the soil type where the trial was done and may differ in other areas, for example lime would have probably been more beneficial on a highly acidic soil.

The quantity of fertiliser added is not mentioned and the NPK rates in the manures may have been relatively low and so affected the results for them.

Of course the rate of increase of the bulbs is not all that is important and it

would have been interesting to know the number of flowers produced.

Sometimes a slower rate of increase can be good as the bulbs don’t get overcrowded and need lifting and dividing as often.

For the record we recommend planting with a complete fertiliser high in potash (75g per m²), an annual dusting with sulphate of potash as the leaves emerge and mulching with well-rotted compost.

The Victorian Daffodil Society website is at: www.daffodilbulbs.com.au/vds

2010 SHOW DATES

To see our living display next spring, please note the following dates;



Farm Display (Menziess Creek)

Friday 20th Aug. to Sunday 26th Sep.

Gardening Australia Expo (Sydney)

Friday 27th Aug. to Sunday 29th Aug.

Royal Adelaide Show

Friday 3rd Sep. to Saturday 11th Sep.

Royal Melbourne Show

Thursday 16th Sep. to Sunday 26th Sep.

Gardening Australia Expo (Melb.)

Friday 1st Oct. to Sunday 3rd Oct.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

During peak workload periods our teenage children have again found time in their busy social lives to help. Jessica helped out at shows in Sydney and Melbourne. Simon helped at the Farm display and the Royal Melbourne Show. We appreciate their help during this busy time.

Last summer Jessica went on student exchange to Germany and so missed our harvesting. Simon helped with the harvest all through the summer.

There is always work to do on the farm, but in our rare free time we have followed our children playing basketball and in their scouting activities.

Christine enjoys her rare quiet times with her chickens and in the ever expanding garden.

Will was honoured by the Scout Association by being awarded the Silver Arrowhead medal for excellent service to scouting.



Chris's chicken's helping with the gardening