

## Your garden in March

### **A host of golden daffodils**

According to tradition, the arrival of March brings winds, mad hares, St David's Day and with it the golden daffodil, national emblem of Wales and all-round herald of spring.

Daffodils (*Narcissus*) are easy to grow and require little maintenance. They can be grown in pots (indoors or out), in rock gardens and borders or set into grass to naturalise in great drifts. Whether you have a balcony or rolling acres, there is nothing so cheerful as the sight of these nodding and dancing heads. If you select your varieties carefully, you can have daffodils in flower from December to May.



For indoor pots there are fragrant varieties, some of which are too tender to grow outside, eg 'Grand Soleil d'Or' or 'Minnow'.

For outdoor planters and windowbaskets, choose the shorter, more dainty cultivars. You'll be able to get up close to appreciate their delicate form. Good choices include many in the cyclamineus group such as 'Jetfire', 'Itzim' and 'Jack Snipe' which all have delicate swept-back petals.

In borders you can grow some of the bigger cultivars which are also good as cut flowers. Try 'Golden Rapture', 'White Mount' or the aptly named 'Cheerfulness'.

For naturalising in grass, go for large drifts of one species, eg our own native *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, the Tenby daffodil, *N. obvallaris* or the late flowering *N. poeticus* var. *recurvens* – the pheasants eye daffodil that is the latest to flower.

### **How to grow them**

Daffodils grow best in well-drained but moisture-retentive soil in sun or partial shade. Buy and plant your bulbs in early autumn.

Ensure you plant them deep enough: in a hole at least 3 times the depth of the bulb, and in a lawn at a depth of 15cm (6 inches). If you get this bit right your daffodils will give you years of pleasure. Plant them too shallow and the bulb will tend to dry out and flowering will stop. If your soil is heavy and poorly drained, put a handful of grit into the bottom of the hole to help drainage.

After flowering, it is good to dead-head, but resist the urge to remove the foliage or tie it into fancy knots! It will be storing energy in the bulb for flowering next year. If the bulbs are in grass, simply mow round them until the foliage has naturally died down. Good news again for us lazy gardeners! You see nature really does have it all worked out and we only need to provide an occasional guiding hand.