

RIBBON PARADE--The WDS Bulb Order, 2018

As they noted in the introduction to the 2018 WDS Bulb Order, Karen and Scott have done some careful research to identify daffodils that have been winners in shows, both here and overseas. Daffodils being daffodils, many of these will also multiply and grace our gardens year after year. Of course, they vary and I'll try to add a few comments which I hope will be helpful in identifying ones that, in my opinion, might best meet members' diverse needs. The comments generally, but not always, follow the order in which bulbs are listed on the order.

A few years ago, I actually counted up all the ADS Gold Ribbon winners from 1999 to 2013. Of the 6 or 8 most frequent winners, two are WDS Bulbs of the Year this year--Pacific Rim and Conestoga--obviously "must-haves" for the exhibitor, but wonderful garden flowers as well, the kind that good passers-by stop to admire and the bad ones steal. There are not many Div 1 intermediates and very few are W-P's. Of these, Commodore Perry stands out again this year--as it did also when it was our Intermediate Bulb of the Year in 2016. Ballydorn may be the only daffodil currently available in the small (only 10) 9 W-O class, so it's a great Throckmorton collection flower. But, like Commodore Perry, it's beautiful and competitive in other classes as well.

The Miniature Collection is a bargain, thoughtfully selected, with show potential throughout and superb in garden borders as well. If you're really serious about mini's, be sure to consider expanding variety and show potential by adding Xit 3 W-W, Angel's Whisper 5 Y-Y, Hummingbird 6 Y-Y (from the Miniature section) and certainly Karen's favorite Little Flik 12 Y-Y, the Mini Bulb of the Year. And while you're at it, get rupicola and/or tenuior (one of Mary Koonce's favorites) from the Div 13/Species sections.

The Starter Collection also has show potential, Ice Wings and Fragrant Rose (which has been Best in Show) in particular. Even if you're starting from scratch, however, you would be well rewarded by expanding the variety of color, form, season and show potential of your collection by adding several of the moderately-priced bulbs (\$6.50 or less) from the open list, including Ombersley 1 Y-Y, Maya Dynasty or Nynja 2 Y-Y, Modulux 2 W-Y, River Queen 2 W-W or Misty Glen 2 W-GWW, Terminator 2 Y-R, Bantam (intermediate) 2 Y-YRR, Armidale 3 Y-O, Kiwi Sunset 4 Y-O, Elizabeth Anne 6 W-GWP, Stratosphere 7 Y-Y (classics), Mot Mot 8 Y-R, Angel Eyes 9 W-GYO and/or *n. poeticus hellenicus* (species). And, of course, Bulbs-of-the-Year Pacific Rim, Conestoga and Merlin would be top selections here. A collection like the foregoing can give you "yellow fever" in one season. And, may I add a word of encouragement to members who might be a bit hesitant to exhibit their flowers. While some varieties (cultivars or species) may tend to garner blue ribbons more frequently than others (maybe because more people are growing them?--hmmm) you never know for sure what's going to happen. There was a perfect example in a California show just a few weeks ago: the Best-in-Show bloom was Acropolis 4 W-O, a cultivar registered in 1955 and exhibited by a youth grower. Closer to home, one of our own WDS members won the Gold Ribbon a few years ago with a beautiful example of a Div 4 cultivar which had been spurned by almost everybody else. So, don't hesitate--grow and show!

For members who already have extensive collections, there are also some promising newer cultivars on the list this year. These include Trumpet Royale 1 W-P, Centenary Gold 2 Y-Y, Copper Mine 2 O-O, Great Joy 2 W-P, Astrid's Memory 3 W-Y (it has been dominant in the U.K.) and Snowy Canyon in the sparse 4 W-W class. I am partial to John Reed's Div 1 and 2 yellows. Those descended from Dream Prince, like Hermann 1 Y-Y and Butter Silk 2 Y-Y excel in the smoothness of their perianths.

Alyash 12 W-Y, being a cross between Beryl and a split-corona seedling, is very different than the relatively few other flowers available in its class. At 80 mm, it would be perfect in the front row of a Throckmorton or

Quinn. And don't overlook Tom Terrific 11a Y-O (Do look in the Intermediate section). It's superb on the show bench as either an intermediate or standard, and it grows easily and abundantly in the garden. If tazettas thrive in your location, order early and include Fencourt Jewel 8 W-P before they're all gone. Speaking of tazettas, WDS is again offering for the first time some of Bob Spotts's newer cultivars--this time all Div 8's with Matador parentage. I have been happy with Storyteller 8 Y-O, also a Matador child, and I'm eager to add all three of the new ones, expecting that they, too, will survive and thrive in my climate here in Bethesda, Md. Of the new ones, at least Pima is fragrant. I think scent adds an extra dimension to a daffodil collection. It doesn't add points, but it sure makes a collection more attractive to any judge with a nose!

There are also some really beautiful cultivars on the list which, although not exactly new, have been only sporadically available. I was lucky to choose Valley Moon 1 YYW-Y a couple of years ago, and I was really taken by the absolutely lovely flower it produced --some of these lighter yellow daffodils are so attractive! Others of this type on the list are Ambergris Caye (1 YYG-Y, and therefore a great Throckmorton selection), Yellow Ivory (It's actually 2 Y-Y--there's a typo in the list), and Haunting 3 Y-Y which is Karen's and my favorite in that class. The list also includes two top notch 1 W-Y's: Macdalla and Smooth Trumpet. Rarer than all, have you ever seen Chelan 2 Y-W (Mitsch, 1975) listed? (Neither have I!) John Reed (Oakwood Daffodils) has preserved a stock of this beauty (see Daffseek) and made it available to us this year. It is one of only two reverse bicolors on the list, the other being Kit Hill 7Y-YWW.

Turning again to miniatures, it may be useful to consider Div X, Div XIII and Div XIII:Species together. *N. bulbocodium* var *conspicuum*, although "Hoop Petticoat" is its synonym, is a species and is therefore classified as a Div 13 flower. It can be shown as a mini. *N. x tenuior*, correctly listed as Div 13, can also be shown as a mini. The same goes for *n. cyclamineus* and *n. rupicola*, both listed under Div XIII:Species. For me, *n. poeticus hellenicus*--"totally charming" for sure--grows too large to show as a mini, but others have done so successfully. There is a really fine selection of miniature cultivars. This year (already!) Bird Music gave me an exceptionally smooth bloom for a Div 1 mini. Be sure also to consider Little Sheba. It's absolutely charming and a consistent, reliable grower, too. For me, it has bloomed earlier than its E-M rating in daffseek. I'm not familiar with The Little Gentleman. It would probably have to grow smaller than its registered size of 66 mm to be shown as a miniature, but would then be a useful first row flower in a large collection. As a pre- 1948 registration, it can also be shown as a classic.

Finally, there is a very strong group of classics. Stratosphere is a must-have in any collection. Horn of Plenty 5 W-W is unique and beautiful--I'll never forget the one I saw in Chambersburg a few years ago. Unfortunately, if you want the REAL Lemon Drops 5 Y-Y (Mitsch, 1956), you'll have to wait for a while. After we finalized the list, our usually reliable source informed us that they were in fact supplying Dutch Lemon Drops 5 W-Y. So, if you do order Lemon Drops, know that contrary to what it says in the bulb order you will be getting Dutch Lemon Drops. **Also, we have been informed that Little Karoo 3 Y-O will not be available this year.**

Overall, an excellent list that Karen and Scott have compiled this year, together with many helpful comments. I have tried to point out a few things that could also help you sort out your order. We all love to talk daffodils, so don't hesitate to call or email if you have any questions about the bulb order. I hope to see you at the show! *Bob Huesmann*