

# Marking Bulbs for Long-Term Identification

While above-ground ID markers are helpful to you and to visitors while daffodils are blooming, they are vulnerable to frost heaving and other mechanical displacements over time; therefore, Daffodil growers need to mark not only the name of the daffodil flower but also the daffodil bulb. We call this the “Insurance Plan” **because underground identification done at the time of planting is a largely fail-safe method of preserving the name of the cultivar.** This is the process the planter has control of; please know that over time you will not remember the names of what you planted. Using the in-ground ID tag is easy and gratifying when it reappears at digging time years later as the clump of bulbs is lifted.

Together, Sara and Suzy will show you how you can keep an identification of the bulbs. The main point is to have everything ready, premade if possible, and ready to go at planting time.

## Tags

1. Names matter
2. Have everything ready at planting time.
3. Use a vinyl tag
4. Use an Industrial Sharpie.
5. “Plant” tags 3-4 inches deep, not below the bulb

Tags can be made of any vinyl product and they can be purchased, made, or recycled. Purchased tags can be ordered online or bought locally



*Figure 1 Purchased tags with string, ready to plant with the bulbs. These are [Cherry Creek Daffodils Vinyl Seedling, Bulb or Pot Labels](#). The hole was added with a drill. It is not necessary to purchase tags; any recycled vinyl will work fine.*

These tags will be buried underground and you do not need to purchase tags. Homemade tags can be made any size and from any color vinyl. The thicker, the better.

Old Mini Blinds cut with scissors or saw



House Siding cut with tin snips or saw

Cottage Cheese, Cool Whip containers cut with scissors; juice containers cut with utility scissors



Everyday containers: Bleach, detergent, fabric softener, shampoo and cream rinse containers can be cut with scissors or saw



Do not make underground tags from translucent milk jugs

IDS advises the use of Industrial Sharpies, but paint pens will also work, especially on very smooth, slick vinyl.



To keep tags from heaving out of the ground and to make them easier to find, we recommend poly baling twine tied to them and the tails allowed to circle the hole perimeter. One way or another, you'll find either the string or the tag at digging time.



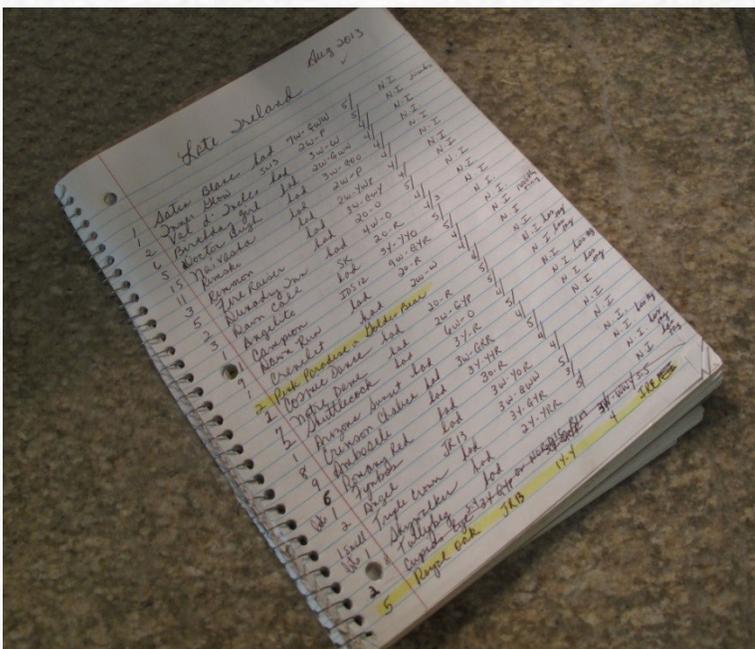
## Lists

1. Make a list of all the bulbs you plant, including the color code and year of registration as a minimum.
- 2.

You can get fancy and use a Computer database which not only allows you to sort by season of bloom, country of origin, or other header, but is easily edited and will be included in your computer backup system:

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	
NAME	Size	CLASS	DIV	PERIANTH	CORONA	V	BREEDER	S	H	FT	YEAR	CC	CTRY	Ma	I	Mi	2013 LOCATION	SPOT	2014 LOCATION	SPOT	QTY	BULB	BLOOMS	97	SOURCE
87	Changing Day	1Y-R	1	Y	R		Reed	2	3		2007		USA				Map 5 Backyard Midseason USA	18-09			2				2013 Oakwood Order
88	Charity May	6Y-Y	6	Y	Y		Cyril Coleman	2	2		1948 pre		ENG				Map 2 Backyard Early Eng - N.I.	11-11			3				2013 WDS Order
89	Charles's Pride	2YYW-W	2	YYW	W		Charles Wheatley	3	3		2005		USA				Map 5 Backyard Midseason USA	11-06			5				had - Charles Wheatley
90	Chateau Impney	2Y-O	2	Y	O		Postles	2	3		1992		Eng				Map 1 Backyard Early England	08-06							2013 Bramcote Order
91	Cheerfulness	4W-Y	4	W	Y		J.B. van der Schoot	4	3		1923 pre		Neth				Woods Tazetta Berm by Street	05-03							

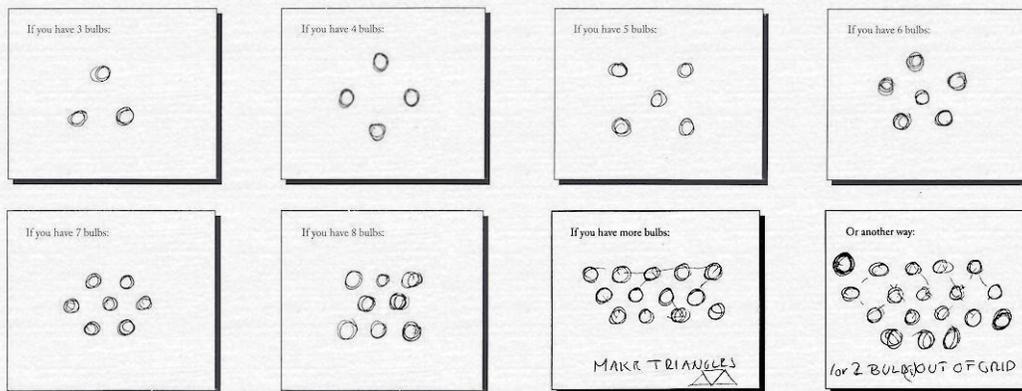
Or just use a simple sheet of paper in a notebook



## Maps

1. Names matter
2. Plant bulbs of one variety in a group or circle – don't string them out in a line.

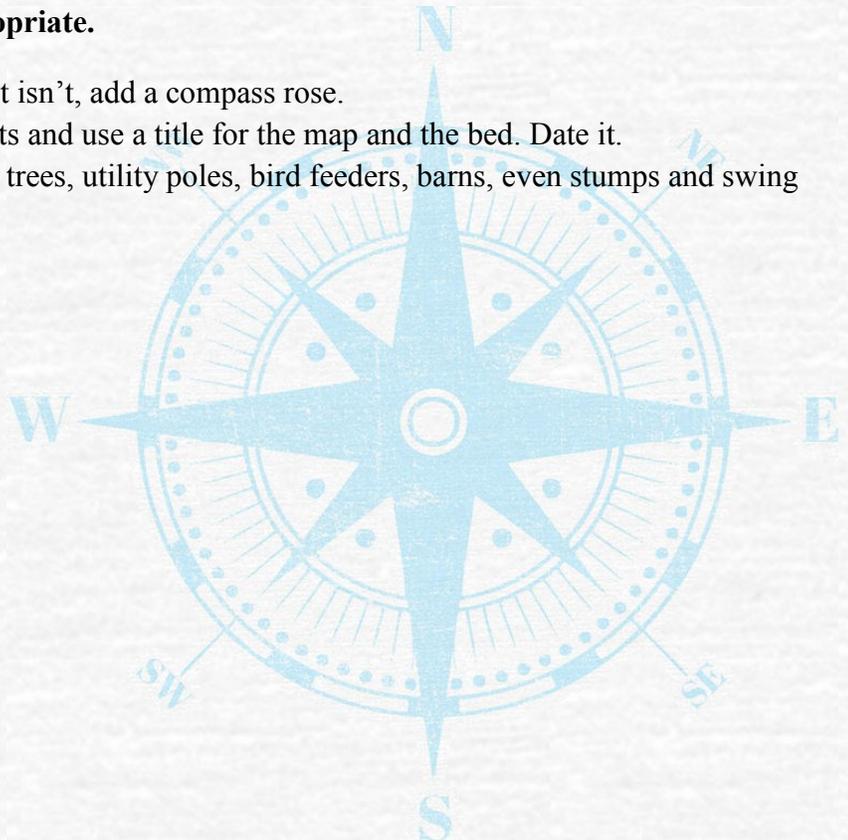
### Joe Hamm's Guide to Planting Multiple Bulbs in a Single Hole



3. For IDS bulbs, use the “one bag, one hole” method.
4. Plant your groups of bulbs in rows or freeform – it doesn't matter.
5. Use a clipboard and good paper. Write in pencil on new maps\*. Daffodils face the sun, and to be consistent, north should always be at the top of the paper.
6. Add “extras” to your map during the winter.
7. Put maps in the same safe place every fall for swift retrieval in spring.
8. \*Check accuracy of maps at bloom time. You can use [www.daffseek.org](http://www.daffseek.org) to see photos if you are unsure the name matches the flower.

Sara and Suzy use both Rows and Freeform plantings depending on the terrain. Rows are more utilitarian and may not always be appropriate.

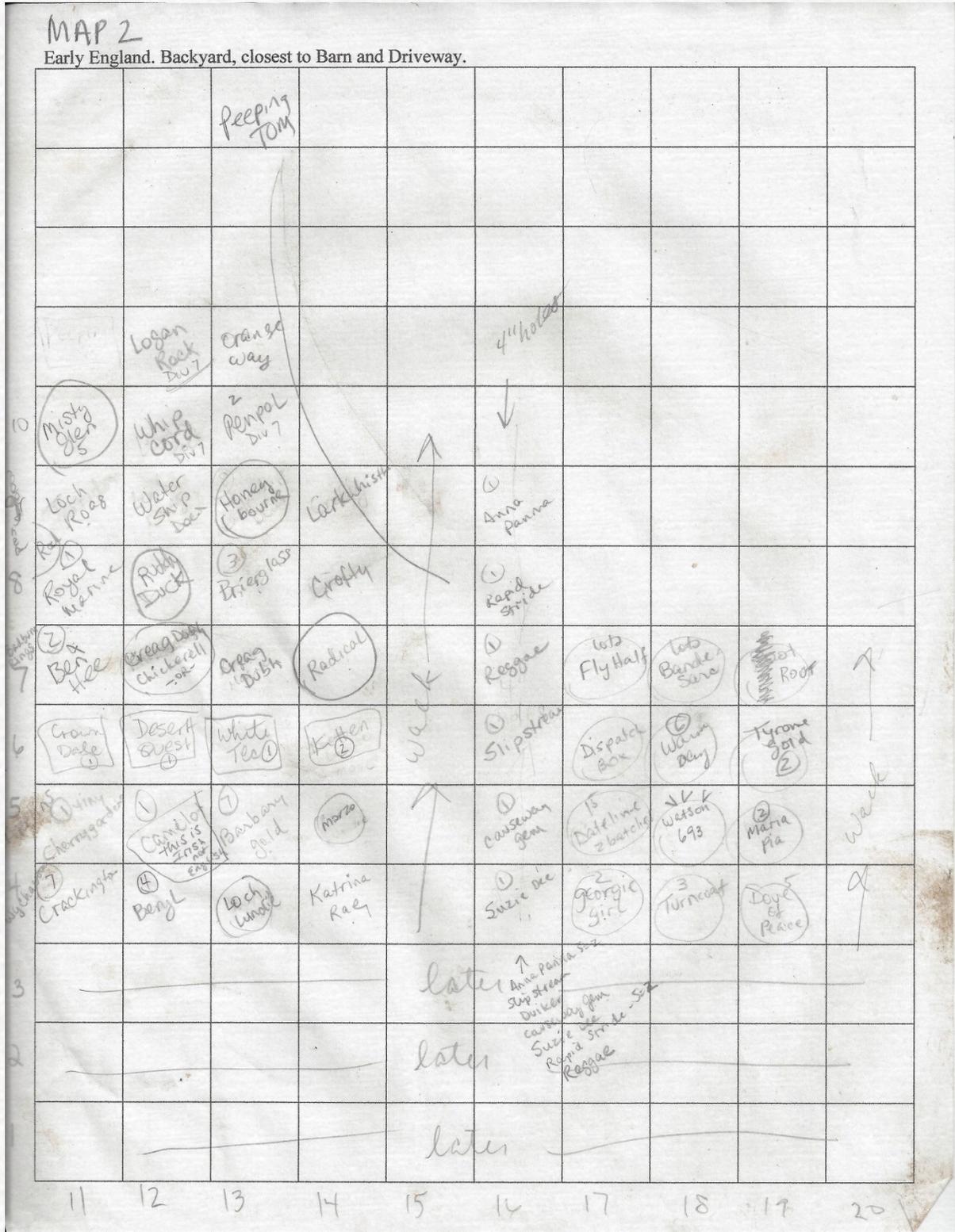
1. North is at the top of the paper. If it isn't, add a compass rose.
2. Pace off feet that the map represents and use a title for the map and the bed. Date it.
3. Put in landmarks such as boulders, trees, utility poles, bird feeders, barns, even stumps and swing sets.



# Maps for Planting in Rows

Maps for planting in rows are easier to read, but the blooming beds lack aesthetic appeal

- A. Use the grid system. Name or number the map(s), along with the rows and columns
- B. Use a computer to aid retrieval and keep old maps easily available.
- C. You can also use the computer to write the entire map, but Sara and Suzy prefer pencils with erasers.

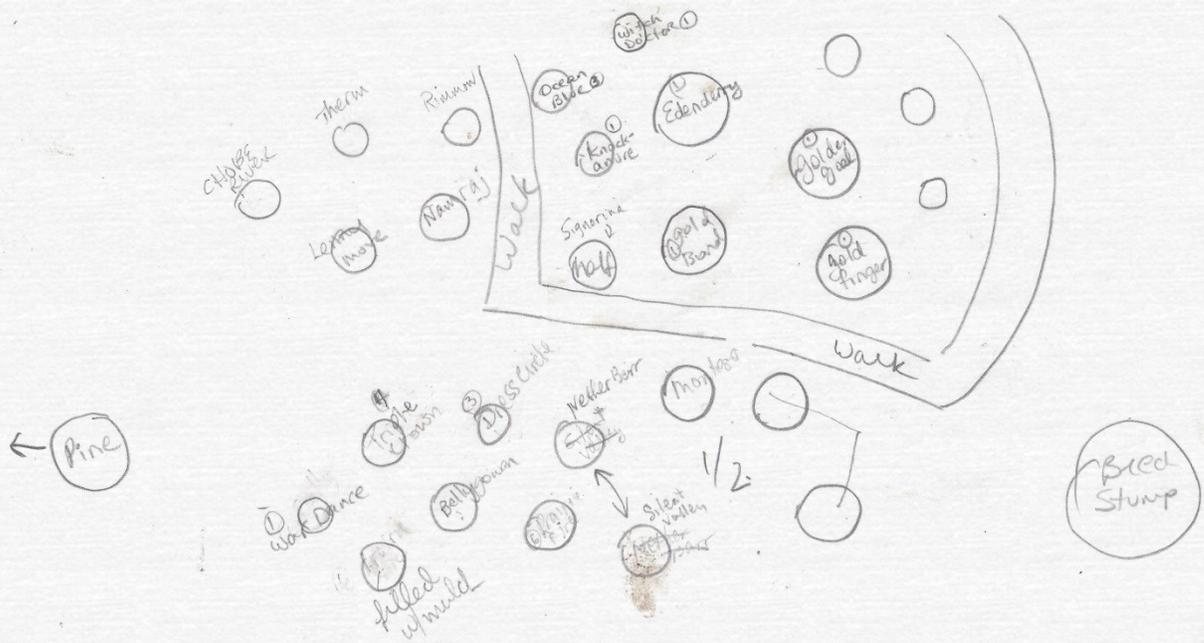


## Freeform Map

Maps for a freeform planting are harder to read, but the blooming bed is more eye-appealing at bloom season

- A. Freeform Maps will never be perfect. Don't worry.
- B. Landmarks are necessary on freeform maps: tree stumps, trees, fences, etc. to aid in reading
- C. Don't plant same color codes next to each other
- D. Intersperse early-blooming daffodils, which you know by sight, to aid in freeform map reading – sometimes you are only looking for the name of the flower in relation to another.

Woods - Map 4  
West side hill - Northern Ireland



Our scholarships depend on our members' bulb harvests, and they also depend on whether those bulb names can be retrieved. Bags of unknown bulbs sell for \$2.00 a bag, but named bulbs start at \$3.00 a bag and go up in price from there. It's also nice to trade bulbs with other members and add to the exchange table, but no one in the club really wants unnamed flowers. Names matter!

*~This was presented at the Aug 2014 IDS meeting by Suzy Wert and Sara Kinne.*

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