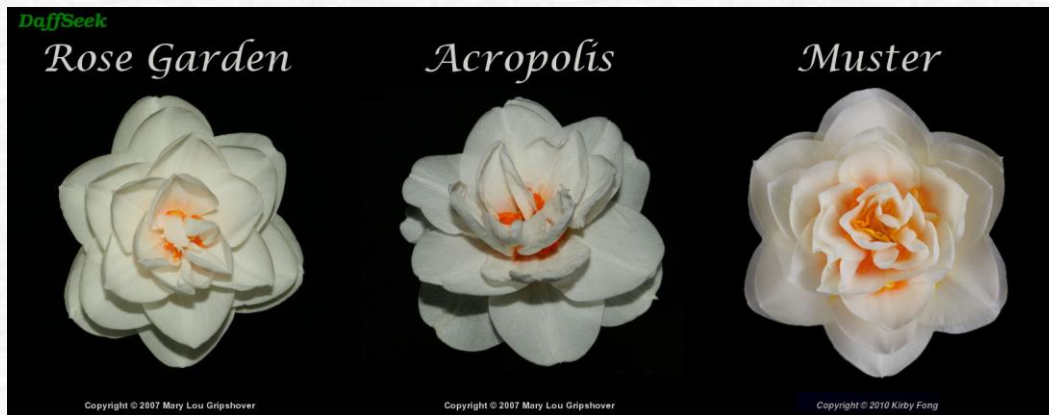


Seeing Double

Tips for Showing Better Double Daffodils

~ from Ian Tyler and Clay Higgins



Three really nice doubles: 'Rose Garden', 4W-R, Late, Grant Mitsch, 1993; A really good 'Acropolis', 4W-O, Late-Mid, J. Lionel Richardson, 1955; 'Muster', 4W-O, Early-Mid, Dave Jackson, 1993.

Hints from Ian Tyler, Standish, Wiggan, England

The first thing I do before staging any flower is to make myself comfortable, being a tall, dark, handsome chap, the idea of standing over a low table, in a half bend is not my idea of a good night out. So sitting is the order of the day for me, then with the flower at a workable height, in its vase (or tube as used in the states), I begin to push back the perianth petals one by one, layer by layer, starting from the back working towards the centre. This can be done with a brush or thumb, one handed while holding the flower head steady with the other.

There will come a point near the centre, when it becomes impossible, as the frills, ruffles or scallops become too tight and a small brush is needed to tease them out. Great care is needed at this stage, so as not to damage the inner segments and lose your hold on the blue ribbon or medal in UK. When teased out, try to push them backwards with a large brush, you will be surprised at what a difference you can make to your doubles. As with all new techniques it is best to practice ahead of time with unwanted flowers.

Hints from Clay Higgins, Harbinger, NC

The problem of doubles bending and falling over seems to be lack of stem development. I learned from my mother-in-law, Marie Bozovich, to hit the daffodils with potash about five weeks before bloom time. I seem to always get big strong stems and even had one stem that wouldn't fit into a test tube as it was so big.

My best winner for division four has been 'Unique', followed by 'Snowfire'. They are earlier (season 2-3 would be my guess), and so far no blasting problem when it turns cold. I also have had good luck with 'Parthenon', but it does blast on me from time to time. I have some of the more exotic Division IVs from Elise Havens and Brian Duncan, but haven't had them long enough to get any experience. Both of my exotics bloomed too late last year for any of the shows I attended.

I like to pick my daffodils a few days before the show, and have developed a method of first grooming the flowers, hardening, then storing until show time. In the grooming process, if the bending of the heads is from rain, etc., it can be corrected before hardening (using a number of natural techniques, including direct and reflected light), however, if the flowers are bent too far to cure, I hope you have something else in the garden to show.

I think Marie Bozovich's idea of growing cultivars with good strong stems in the first place is the ultimate answer to strong doubles and then weeding out the weak varieties from your show bench collection overtime.

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