

From The Bedford Extension Master Gardener HELP DESK

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TRANSPLANTING DAFFODILS: WHEN AND WHERE TO?



Photo: <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G6550>

QUESTION

A few years ago we received a telephone call in early March from a client who wanted to know when he should transplant his daffodils (genus *Narcissus*) and could he put them under a magnolia tree.

DIAGNOSIS / RECOMMENDATION

The client was advised to wait until the daffodils had finished blooming and the foliage had died back. At that time, he should carefully dig the bulbs up, clean off most of the soil, dry the bulbs, store them until October / November and then plant them. [1] The client was advised not to plant the daffodils under a magnolia tree. Magnolia trees are

evergreen with very dense foliage, thus there is insufficient light available for daffodils to thrive.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hardy spring-flowering (January-May) bulbs are planted in the fall.

Before planting bulbs, careful consideration should be given to site selection, including length of direct sunlight available to the bulbs -- at least 5 to 6 hours of direct sunlight a day if the bulbs are going to be dug up and stored over the summer, and 8 to 10 hours of daily sunlight for good flowering if they are going to be left in the ground year round.

Additional considerations for site selection location include temperature, soil texture and drainage, and function. Once the site has been selected, careful site preparation, proper planting techniques of the bulbs, and appropriate maintenance should result in healthy flowering plants.

If the bulbs will be left in place instead of being dug up, the following additional steps should be taken in order to ensure healthy blooms the following year:

- When flowers fade, cut them off to prevent seed formation;
- After the plants bloom, fertilize them lightly with 5-10-10 fertilizer, avoiding high-nitrogen fertilizer;
- Do not cut the leaves after flowering until they start to wither;

- After leaves turn yellow, cut and destroy the stems and foliage of the plants, so as not to spread possible disease to new growth the following year;
- If the bulbs have been naturalized -- planted in drifts or largish groupings in places other than edging for your lawn or garden -- avoid mowing or covering the daffodil foliage before it matures. [2] [3]

For additional information please see “Flowering Bulbs: Culture and Maintenance,” VCE Pubs # 426-201 [2] and the “Growing Daffodils” page on the American Daffodil Society website [4]

Linda E., Bedford Extension Master Gardener

RESOURCE LINKS

[1] <http://www.garden.org/plantguide/?q=show&id=2062>

[2] <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-201>

[3] http://www.landscape-america.com/gardens/bulbs/naturalized_daffodils.html

[4] <http://daffodilusa.org/growing-daffodils/>

All resource links accessed February 19, 2016

Answers provided herein were based on specific situations and growing conditions.

These recommendations may or may not be appropriate for all circumstances.

For specific recommendations for your particular situation please contact your local Cooperative Extension Office.

MASTER GARDENER HELP DESK

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