

IT'S OCTOBER: TIME TO PLANT THE DAFFODILS (AND TULIPS TOO!)

By Karl Milde

Here's a gentle reminder for those of you who plan ahead (you know who you are!): It's time to order or pick up your daffodil bulbs for planting in October.

Imagine Spring. Now imagine spring without forsythia and, yes, without the daffodils. You can't!

You can never plant too many daffodils. Get your bulbs, plant them in the ground, and enjoy the flowers in the spring. There are quite a few varieties, so you'll have to choose. You can plant them in a new area or add daffodils to areas you've previously planted. You can even add tulips, but we'll get to that shortly. Just know that the possibilities are endless.

Here's a simple tutorial for planting your daffodils:

1. Go online, select a grower, and look at the beautiful daffodils they have to offer;
2. Select the variety(ies) of daffodils you like best and order the bulbs, or look for them at garden centers starting this month;
3. When the bulbs arrive, place them in a paper bag or box, and store them in a cool dark place (a closet or your garage would be a good spot);
4. Come late October, when the daytime temperature has dropped below 60 degrees (they need to be cool to hibernate for the winter) plant the bulbs 4" to 6" apart (they don't like to be crowded) with their pointy stems aimed upward, sufficiently deep so that these stems are covered with about 2" of soil;
5. Soak the soil with water;
6. Cover the soil with a layer of mulch so it will retain moisture longer;
7. Water again twice: one week later and two weeks later; and
8. Having put them to bed, leave your bulbs alone to sleep through the winter.

In the spring your bulbs will awaken. You'll see green shoots poke up above the surface. The spring rains should provide the necessary water, but if it doesn't rain for a couple of weeks, act as their Rain God and soak them once or twice. Soon after, the green shoots will mature into beautiful daffodils. What a wonder of Mother Nature!

If you are a fan of tulips (as I am), you can follow the same eight steps to plant tulip bulbs. But be forewarned: Unlike daffodils, which deer absolutely avoid due to a toxin they contain, they love the taste of tulips. So, you will need to spray them every other day with a deer repellent.

That's all there is to it! So, like the title of this article says, October is the time to plant the daffodils. And tulips too!