



Helping Carolinians Increase Their Knowledge of Gardening, Manage Their Landscape Investment & Protect the Environment

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

## A Host of Lovely Daffodils

**A** host of golden daffodils tossing their heads in sprightly dance, as William Wordsworth's poem describes them, is truly one of the delights of spring. And even though gardeners seem divided on what to call these beauties – daffodil, jonquil or paperwhite – one thing they can agree on is that these plants in the *Narcissus* family are timeless, elegant classics enjoyed by both the novice and experienced gardener alike.

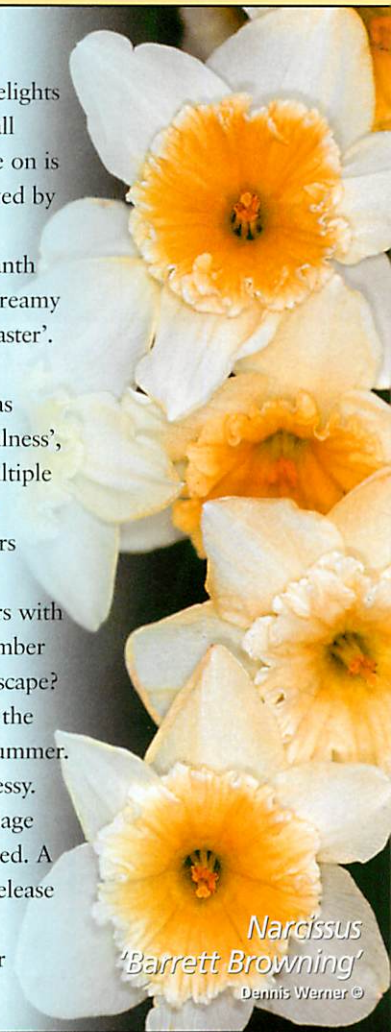
The charm of *Narcissus* is its flower shape, consisting of an outer perianth and an inner corona or trumpet. Single-colored cultivars range from the creamy white of 'Mount Hood' to the golden yellow of 'King Alfred' and 'Dutch Master'. 'Ice Follies' is a popular bicolor, with a white perianth and ruffled yellow trumpet. Even more spectacular are the orange trumpeted bi-colors such as 'Barrett Browning'. Don't forget double blossoms such as 'Yellow Cheerfulness', or miniatures such as 'Minnow', which stands only 10 inches tall with multiple blossoms per stem. The variety is endless – I got to 75 in the JC Raulston Arboretum database before I stopped counting – though unproven cultivars should be tested in your garden on a limited scale.

Time of flowering varies greatly among cultivars and presents gardeners with the opportunity to have a continuously blooming daffodil bed from December through March. What could be a more cheerful addition to the winter landscape?

Full to partial sunlight is best. The blossoms generally will turn to face the sun. Make use of companion plants to keep the bed interesting through summer. Don't cut the foliage back until it has faded, which leaves the bed a bit messy.

When flowering performance wanes, it's time to divide. Just as the foliage fades is the best time. Share extra bulbs with friends or plant into a new bed. A soil test will tell you which nutrients to add, though in general any slow-release garden fertilizer should suffice.

The paperwhite cultivars, not hardy in North Carolina, are popular for indoor forcing. *Paul McKenzie*



*Narcissus 'Barrett Browning'*  
Dennis Werner ©

Inside

2

Latino Immigrants, Specialty Crops

3

Enviro-Tip

4

Garden Spot

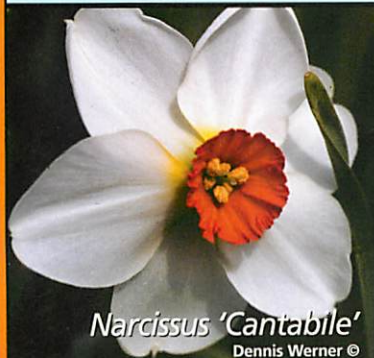
This issue sponsored by

**Black Kow**

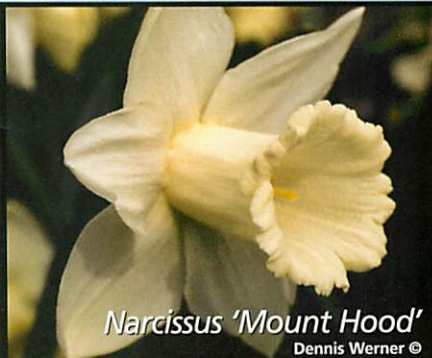
Don't Forget The Black Kow.



**BLACK KOW**  
Composted Cow Manure



*Narcissus 'Cantabile'*  
Dennis Werner ©



*Narcissus 'Mount Hood'*  
Dennis Werner ©



*Narcissus 'February Gold'*  
Dennis Werner ©



Poblano



Tomatillo



Quintonil (Quelite)

## Latino Immigrants Stir Interest in Specialty Crop

North Carolina is home to a rapidly growing Latino population. These immigrants bring their cuisine with them, creating interest in certain vegetables and herbs not traditionally grown here. While some of these crops are of a tropical nature, others can be grown quite satisfactorily in North Carolina. As with all people, there are distinct differences in food preferences from one Latin American country to another and even among regions in the same country. Don't assume everyone who grew up in Latin America is a big fan of chile peppers, for instance. Here's a list of crops you might want to try in your own garden, or be on the look-out for at specialty markets.

**Calabaza** – Calabaza is a tropical pumpkin, known as ayote in Costa Rica. Fruit is sometimes used in the immature state (ayote tierno). Grow calabaza like other pumpkins. A hybrid variety known as 'La Estrella' is now available. The ones sold in stores are highly variable. Gardeners may wish to save seeds from one of these types to plant. Male flowers are sometimes used in cooking and are known as flor de calabaza.

**Chiles** – Three of the most popular chile peppers in Latino stores are jalapeno, serrano and poblano. There are a wide number of chile varieties available, both hybrid and open-pollinated (non-hybrid). Poblanos are a large pepper, commonly used for stuffing in chiles rellenos. If you grow poblanos, make sure to use hybrid varieties. They are much superior in yield. Poblanos will

almost certainly need staking. These peppers are known as anchos when dried.

**Cilantro** – Cilantro is an extremely popular herb in Latin American cooking. However, even the slower-to-bolt varieties such as 'Santo' and 'Leisure' will not take much hot weather before they bolt. Do not set out transplants. The best time to sow seed is around Feb. 15 through April 15 for an early crop, or Aug. 1 through Oct. 30 for a late crop. Contact your Cooperative Extension Center for best planting times for your location.

**Epazote** – A popular herb in Mexico for use when cooking beans. A relative of lamb's-quarter, it grows easily. Harvest before flowers appear.

**Quintonil** – A type of amaranth used as a spinach substitute. In Mexico, various plants such as this are used for greens and are called quelites.

**Tomatillo** – These husk tomatoes are popular in Mexican cooking and are the key ingredient in salsa verde. Green is the most popular color although purple tomatillos are also available.

**Plum Tomatoes** – Plum tomatoes are not an unusual crop but they are mentioned here because they are excellent for salsa due to their meatiness.

**Verdolaga** – A cultivated form of the common weed known as purslane. It can be used fresh or cooked. This is another type of quelite and is said to be a source of omega-3 fatty acids.

For more information, e-mail the author at [Kevin\\_Starr@ncsu.edu](mailto:Kevin_Starr@ncsu.edu) or call (704) 736-8452.

**Kevin Starr**

## Breaking Seed Codes

Disease resistance codes of seed varieties refer to the levels of disease resistance in seeds that keep pathogens (organisms that cause disease) from affecting plants. Many of these pathogens are extremely difficult to control once established and are best managed by starting with disease-tolerant plants. To understand a particular code, refer to the specific company seed catalog or representative. Listed at right are a few typical codes and the associated diseases of resistance.

Disease resistance is an important step in Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Starting with healthy plants and, in this case, plants less susceptible to disease sets a garden up for success rather than a season-long fight against insect and disease pressures. Superior seed is only part of the solution, however. Contact your local Cooperative Extension Center to learn about crop rotation, garden sanitation and other ways to keep your garden disease-free.

**Mark Blevins**

Seed Code	Disease Resistance
V, Vert	Verticillium Wilt – <i>Verticillium</i> species. Prevalent in cooler climates, this disease causes yellowing, stunting, wilting and defoliation, especially on tomatoes, potatoes and peppers.
F, F1, F2, F3	Fusarium Wilt – <i>Fusarium</i> species. Depending on the species, damping-off, wilting, yellowing or fruit rot may occur. Three major strains occur in North Carolina. For example, seeds coded as F1 are resistant to Fusarium wilt race 1.
N	Nematodes – Various species. Nematodes are animals that resemble microscopic worms that can cause various root and foliar problems, including root knot nematode.



## How do I dispose of yard debris in the most environmentally sound way?

Until 1993, most yard waste ended up in sanitary landfills. It took a new law to force municipalities and homeowners to make more environmentally friendly choices. In some municipalities, homeowners can place debris by the curb for pick up. In others, it may need to be hauled to a designated site such as a yard waste facility.

Leaves, branches and grass clippings at yard waste facilities are recycled into mulch and leaf compost that the public and landscapers can use.

Many gardeners routinely compost yard debris. It's best not to bag grass clippings, especially with tall fescue and cool-season

turfgrasses. Clippings decompose naturally when left on the yard, releasing organic fertilizer for a better lawn.

Instead of trashing leaves, till into the garden to enhance soil structure. Or, cover a vegetable garden with leaves during the winter to prevent soil erosion. Invest in a composter if you want a ready supply of leaf compost. Use compost as mulch in flower beds and to make potting soil. Don't ever burn leaves.

Rent or purchase a wood chipper to handle small branches. Use wood chips for a pathway, or create a mulch ring under a mature tree.

**Toby Best**

## ENVIRO-TIP

### Do You Need a Preemergent or a Postemergent?

The use of herbicides in the home lawn is an accepted and often used method of weed control by homeowners. Many times, however, weed control is less than successful and the desired level of control is never reached.

Herbicides are either preemergent or postemergent. The homeowner must understand how these pesticides work in order to use them in the most beneficial way. Preemergent herbicides prevent the weed seed from germinating. A good use for this type of herbicide would be to prevent crabgrass in the lawn. But, you would need to apply the herbicide before the seeds germinate in the early spring. This is why crabgrass preventers are recommended for early spring application. A preemergent herbicide only affects ungerminated seeds.

A postemergent herbicide is one that works on weeds that have already germinated and are actively growing. The weed must be up and

growing in the lawn before you apply postemergent herbicides. The pesticide must actually touch the growing plant to be successful in eradicating it.

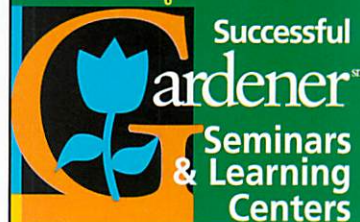
Weather conditions such as temperatures and rainfall can affect the efficiency of both of these herbicides. Therefore, it is essential to read the entire label and follow the directions when using one of these chemicals. Identification of the weed to be treated is also a necessary step in successful weed control. Product labels give very specific lists of plants that will be controlled by that particular pesticide.

The method in which these two types of herbicides work is so different that little weed control can be expected when preemergent and postemergent herbicides are used on the wrong plants. Usually, when a pesticide fails to give the expected results, it is the applicator and not the pesticide that is at fault.

**Donna Teasley**



## Extension's



### ► March 1 - 5

- Southern Spring Home & Garden Show, Charlotte Merchandise Mart
- Get your gardening questions answered at the Learning Center, staffed throughout show by Extension agents and Master Gardeners

### ► March 3

- Attend Successful Gardener Seminars offered throughout day

### ► March 19

- 2 to 4 p.m.
- Drought-Tolerant Groundcovers for the Triangle
- Sarah P. Duke Gardens, 426 Anderson Street, Durham
- Call (919) 668-1707 to register

### ► March 24 - 26

- Southern Ideal Home Show, Greensboro Coliseum
- Get your gardening questions answered at the Learning Center, staffed throughout show by Extension agents and Master Gardeners

### ► March 25

- Attend Successful Gardener Seminars offered throughout day

[www.successfulgardener.org](http://www.successfulgardener.org)

## gardentalk



*"And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils."*

**William Wordsworth**



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## Gardening in March

### Lawns

- Apply preemergent herbicide for crabgrass control.
- Reseed bare spots in cool-season grasses such as fescue.
- Do not fertilize cool-season grass after March 15.

### Ornamentals

- This is the best time of the year to severely cut back overgrown shrubs that will tolerate heavy pruning.
- Some trees will drip sap if pruned during March. These include maples, elms, birches and dogwoods. While this "bleeding" won't hurt the tree, it can be avoided by waiting until June to prune these trees.
- Finish up pruning chores on everything (other than spring-flowering shrubs) before buds break.
  - Divide fall-blooming perennials in the spring. Some perennials such as daylilies, hosta and iris can be divided anytime.

### Edibles

- Don't till clay soil when it is wet enough to stick to a hoe or tiller tine.
  - Cold-tolerant vegetables such as lettuce and radishes can be direct seeded this month in the piedmont and coastal plains. Transplant cabbage and broccoli this month. Check with your local Cooperative Extension Center for the approximate time.
    - Fertilize fruits and nuts now. Too much nitrogen fertilizer will reduce quality. Apples or peaches with more than 12 inches of growth last year will not need nitrogen.
    - The first pesticide application for insects and diseases on peaches and plums is based on the blooms which will appear sometime this month. If leaf curl has been a problem, spray before bloom. For brown rot and plum curculios, apply the first spray after bloom. Never apply insecticides during bloom. *David Goforth*

### The Legacy Demonstration Garden,

located at the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Center in Greensboro, is the place to visit if you want to see how your lawn and gardening practices measure up environmentally.

You'll see examples of rain gardens, which are becoming more popular as a means of collecting and processing stormwater runoff. You will also see cisterns and rain barrels, which are used to divert stormwater runoff. The native plants collection and small backyard pond are examples of how to attract beneficial insects and wildlife, many of which keep unwanted pest populations down. In addition, there are examples of shade, native and tropical gardens, all of which provide ideas and inspiration for your own landscape.

The garden, located at 3309 Burlington Road in Greensboro, was planned, installed and is maintained by Extension's Master Gardeners of Guilford County. It is open to the public from sunup to sunset. For more information call (336) 375-5876.

*Karen Neill*

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