



Floral & Gift Ideas as Fresh as our Flowers!

Hydrangea Bleu.com

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Welcome:

My book group is reading "The School of Essential Ingredients" this month; a novel centered around a cooking class. As with all good novels, the story weaves the characters' relationships and experiences through a common experience, in this case a cooking class run by a very intuitive chef. The class connects people, triggers memories, inspires new directions exposing "essential ingredients" of life. I like to think of flowers that way, "essential ingredients" of everyday life - an organic way of connecting us to each other. Flowers have always served this purpose in one way or another - originally medicinally, these days emotionally. They provide an emotional sustenance of sorts. As food feeds our bodies, flowers feed our souls and a life well lived requires food for the soul. Don't you think? Here's to living a life with "essential ingredients".....Best wishes, Anne



949.454.9041

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anne@hydrangeableu.com

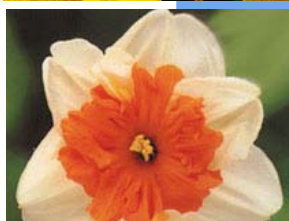
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Flower of the Month: DAFFODILS

Mother Nature teases us this time of year. She brings us the glorious daffodil with it's unique crown shaped center and vibrant color and just as we start to revel in it, she takes it away. Not nice! What the daffodil lacks in vase life, however,



it makes up for in impact, and as occurs so often in life, you learn to accept the trade-offs. Because their vase life is relatively short, to get the most enjoyment be sure to purchase them in the "pencil" stage - which means that the flower is still a tight bud with just a bit of color showing.



In case you didn't know, daffodils are part of the Narcissus genus. Yes, that means they're related to the highly fragrant "Paper Whites" so abundant at Christmas. Although we think of daffodils as being all yellow, they actually are available in yellow & white,



yellow, they actually are available in yellow & white, yellow & orange, white & orange, pink, and even lime green. (I admit I haven't seen a lime green daffodil, but doesn't it sound yummy!)



In the world of flowers, there are some varieties that require a bit more effort to prepare them - daffodils are one of those varieties. All Narcissus exude a slimy sap when freshly cut. This substance is toxic to other flowers and so must be eliminated first. To do this you can put the freshly cut stems through a series of rinsings.



Place the fresh cut daffodils in a clean container of water. After about 20 minutes pull the stems from the container and check the stem ends for a continued oozing of sap. If the stems are still dripping with this slimy substance, repeat the rinsing process in another clean container of water. You may need to repeat this process a few times. Once the oozing has ceased the daffodils are safe to combine with other flowers.



TIPS & TRICKS FOR DAFFODILS

1. Vase life is 4 to 6 days.
2. Freshly cut daffodils exude a slimy substance that can result in an early demise of other flowers, especially tulips and anemones, if not conditioned properly.

“Whispers From the Flower Fields”



"If I had a single flower for every time I think about you, I could walk forever in my garden." Claudia Ghandi
Thanks a bunch for picking

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Daffodil Garden: “The Daffodil Principle ”

Daffodil Garden: "The Daffodil Principle"

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Someone sent this to me a few years ago and I thought it was appropriate to share this month. Enjoy!

Several times my daughter had telephoned to say, "Mother, you must come to see the daffodils before they are over." I wanted to go, but it was a two hour drive from Laguna to Lake Arrowhead. "I will come next Tuesday", I promised a little reluctantly on her third call.

Next Tuesday dawned cold and rainy. Still, I had promised, and reluctantly I drove there. When I finally walked into Carolyn's house I was welcomed by the joyful sounds of happy children. I delightedly hugged and greeted my grandchildren.

"Forget the daffodils, Carolyn! The road is invisible in these clouds and fog, and there is nothing in the world except you and these children that I want to see badly enough to drive another inch!"

"But first we're going to see the daffodils. It's just a few blocks," Carolyn said. "I'll drive. I'm used to this."

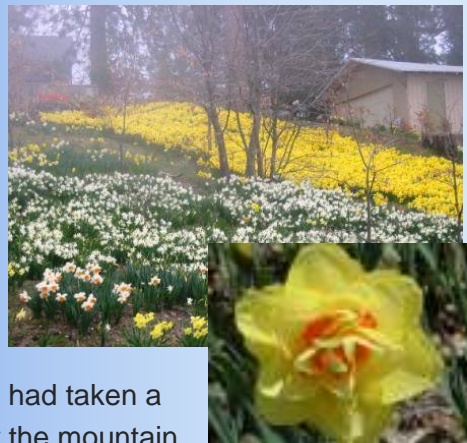
"Carolyn," I said sternly, "please turn around." "It's all right, Mother. I promise. You will never forgive yourself if you miss this experience."

After about twenty minutes, we turned onto a small gravel road and I saw a small church. On the far side of the church, I saw a hand lettered sign with an arrow that read, "Daffodil Garden." We got out of the car, each took a child's hand, and I followed Carolyn down the path. Then, as we turned a corner, I looked up and gasped.

Before me lay the most glorious sight. It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it over the mountain peak and its surrounding slopes. The flowers were planted in majestic, swirling patterns, great ribbons and swaths of deep orange, creamy white, lemon yellow, salmon pink, and saffron and butter yellow. Each different colored variety was planted in large groups so that it swirled and flowed like its own river with its own unique hue. There were five acres of flowers.

"Who did this?" I asked Carolyn. "Just one woman," Carolyn answered. "She lives on the property. That's her home." Carolyn pointed to a well kept A-frame house, small and modestly sitting in the midst of all that glory. We walked up to the house.

On the patio we saw a poster. "Answers to the Questions I Know You Are Asking," was the headline. The first answer was a simple one..."50,000 bulbs," it read. The second answer was, "One at a time, by one woman. Two hands, two feet, and one brain." The third



one..."50,000 bulbs," it read. The second answer was, "One at a time, by one woman. Two hands, two feet, and one brain." The third answer was, "Begun in 1958."

For me, that moment was a life-changing experience. I thought of this woman whom I had never met, who, more than 40 years before, had begun, one bulb at a time, to bring her vision of beauty and joy to an obscure mountaintop. Planting one bulb at a time, year after year, this unknown woman had forever changed the world in which she lived. One day at a time, she had created something of extraordinary magnificence, beauty, and inspiration. The principle her daffodil garden taught is one of the greatest principles of celebration.



That is, learning to move toward our goals and desires one step at a time - often just one baby step at a time- and learning to love the doing, learning to use the accumulation of time. When we multiply tiny pieces of time with small increments of daily effort, we too will find we can accomplish magnificent things. We can change the world...

"It makes me sad in a way, " I admitted to Carolyn. "What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal thirty-five or forty years ago and had worked away at it 'one bulb at a time' through all those years? Just think what I might have been able to achieve!"

My daughter summed up the message of the day in her usual direct way. "Start tomorrow," she said. She was right. It's so pointless to think of the lost hours of yesterdays. The way to make learning a lesson of celebration instead of a cause for regret is to only ask, "How can I put this to use today?"

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