

## DAFFODIL DREAMS

> There's never been a daffodil mania. Unlike tulips, grown from bulbs that once rivaled the price of a house, these bulb flowers tend to be undervalued and underused, particularly in floral design. Most people picture buttercup yellow trumpet-shaped blooms that grow in their yard or in public medians, contributing to the perception that they're common. However, there are 13 divisions and thousands of cultivars of daffodils in a range of shapes, colors, sizes, and fragrances — most of which are grown at small, local farms. Because their season (February through May) precedes farmers' markets and weddings in many areas, daffodils often miss their turn in the spotlight.

"There have been around 25,000 cultivars created by man, of which perhaps 250 are grown commercially," says Christopher Harley of Q Daffs in Shelton, Connecticut. "There's so much variety that you seldom see on the cut market, including many daffodils with the soft, frilly aesthetic many florists want, and that's something I'd like to change." In addition to daffodils' delicate appearance, they also have a good vase life (10 days) and a perfume-like scent — two traits that consumers prize.

"Specialty daffodils are some of the most ideal cut flowers on the planet, yet many people don't know about them," echoes Jason Delaney, a hybridizer and owner of PHS Daffodils in Flora, Illinois, where he grows roughly 4,000 cultivars. His clientele, primarily small American farmers, plant his bulbs and introduce more flower lovers to the wealth of daffodils available. "They have been hugely beneficial to us. Still, I'd love to see daffodils' exposure take off. There's so much that floral professionals aren't using — and their customers are missing out."



**'GERANIUM'**  
Tazetta daffodils, Harvest Harmony Farm



**'CRAGFORD'**  
Tazetta daffodils, Q Daffs



**'MARTINETTE'**  
Tazetta daffodils, Q Daffs



**'ACTAEA'**  
Small-cupped daffodils, Q Daffs



**'FIRESTARTER'**  
Small-cupped daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'NEW KID'**  
Small-cupped daffodils, PHS Daffodils





**'REPLETE'**  
Double daffodils, Harvest Harmony Farm



**'SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL'**  
Double daffodils, Q Daffs



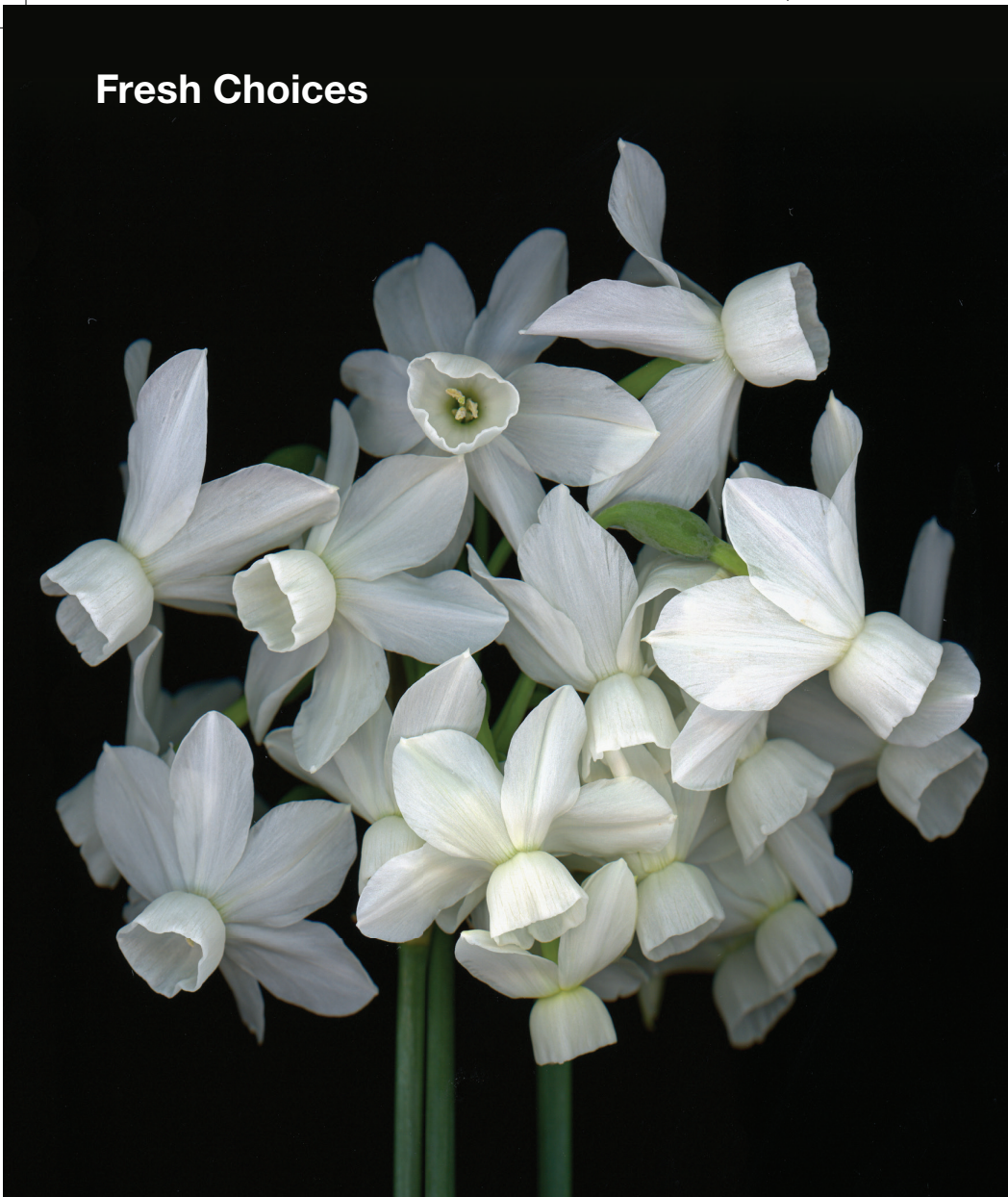
**'MAELSTROM'**  
Double daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'TAHITI'**  
Double daffodils, Q Daffs



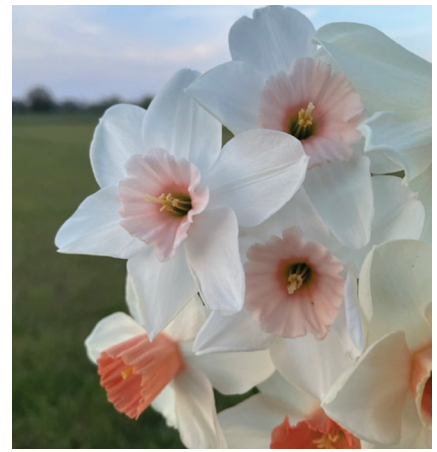
# Fresh Choices



**'RINGING BELLS'**  
Triandrus daffodils, Q Daffs



**'THALIA'**  
Triandrus daffodils, Q Daffs



**'LAVENDER LADY'**  
Large-cupped daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'PINK UPS'**  
Large-cupped daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'RED CANDY'**  
Large-cupped daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'MODERN ART'**  
Large-cupped daffodils, PHS Daffodils





**'MOBY DICK'**  
Split corona daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'THRICE'**  
Split corona daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'DEAR MICHAEL'**  
Split corona daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'BLAZING SADDLES'**  
Split corona daffodils, PHS Daffodils



**'KA POW'**  
Split corona daffodils, PHS Daffodils

While typically associated with yellow, daffodils come in a wide spectrum, including white, cream, apricot, lavender-pink, orange, and green. Large-cupped varieties have a bold presentation, great for funeral and event work. Doubles have the full look of camelias. Split coronas, commonly known as “butterfly daffodils,” have divided cups and draw comparisons to orchids. “People go crazy when they see them,” Delaney says. Triandrus and tazettas are floriferous varieties that, along with small-cupped daffodils, “bring structure, pattern and poise to more formal arrangements,” Harley says. Triandrus daffodils, in particular, “should be used with abandon for May weddings,” he adds.

Delaney would love to see floral designers experiment with different types of daffodils. He recommends recutting stems under hot water to achieve a freshly picked, fully opened look. To prevent their sap from harming other flowers in an arrangement, simply change the water two to three times while processing.

Want to try growing your own? Dig deep — at least six to eight inches. “These bulbs are huge and full of water. When you place them only an inch or so under soil, they shrivel up and split,” Delaney says. “But if you give them enough room, they should still be growing 100 years from now, and established daffodils produce much more flowers than new bulbs. Patience pays off.” 🌷

**Katie Vincent** is the senior contributing editor for the Society of American Florists.