



## CLIPPINGS a weekly column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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### For Immediate Release

#### Spring is Here

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One of my favorite signs of spring is the appearance of daffodil cut flowers. These daffodils are usually graced with a brilliant yellow color coupled with a sweet fragrance.

Daffodil is the common name for all flowers of the genus *Narcissus*. In England, they have a long association with Lent and are often referred to as the "Lent Lily" and in Wales, they are the national emblem.

Legend often associates bunches of these flower with good fortune, but warns that when given as a single bloom, the daffodil can foretell misfortune. In Canada and the United States, the bright yellow daffodil is the symbol of hope and a successful fundraiser for the Canadian and American Cancer Societies.



To spread out the bloom period, cut daffodils may be kept in the refrigerator. But, because daffodils lose moisture through their stems, it is important to keep the humidity high. This can be accomplished by placing the blooms in a deep container and covering as much of the stem as possible with water. Another option is to create a "tent" with a stick and placing a plastic bag around the stick, flowers and stems to retain humidity.



Daffodils are excellent cut flowers when conditioned. This involves several steps. First, use a sharp knife or scissors to remove about an inch from the bottom of the stem. Many flower arrangers will make this cut at an angle to help maximize the surface area, so the stem can absorb more water.

Consider using a floral preservative in the water. A preservative will help keep the water clean, provide sugar to the flower, and generally extend the life of the blossoms. Most floral shops or garden centers sell floral preservatives. However, if you don't have a floral preservative, skip it and just use clean water.

Place the cut flowers in the vase containing the water as quickly as possible. The faster stems are hydrated, the longer they will last. In fact, some florists recommend cutting the bottom end of the stem while holding it under running water and immediately placing the cut stem in the vase.

Don't forget to check the water daily and change as needed. When the water level gets low or starts to get cloudy, simply dump it out and replace with clean, fresh water and floral preservative.

Finally, place your daffodils in a cool location away from direct sunlight. The daffodils should open in one to two days and often will continue to bloom for a week or more. Enjoy – spring is here!

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