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10 Top Daffodils for the Midwest

Celebrate the season with cheery, colorful—and Midwest-hardy—daffodils.

Written by Karen Weir-Jimerson. Photographs by Mark Katzman/Ferguson Katzman

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Early heralds of spring

Daffodils, also known as jonquils and the botanically correct *Narcissus*, light up early spring landscapes with shades of white, cream, yellow, orange and light pink. Other advantages of these beauties:

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Great Midwest daffodils: "Tahiti"

A double daffodil! Swirls of bright yellow petals are accented by red-orange centers. 'Tahiti' naturalizes (reblooms and spreads) well and also makes beautiful cut flowers. Grows 14 inches tall. This showy daffodil won the 2003 Wister Award for garden excellence (the highest award from the American Daffodil Society) and the Missouri Botanical Garden's Plants of Merit designation.

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'Fragrant Rose': appealing fragrance

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'Fortissimo': midspring blooms

Enjoy the midspring blooms of 'Fortissimo' outdoors, and then cut a bouquet to bring indoors -- this daffodil has strong stems and is long-lasting. The showy flower features yellow crepe-paper petals that surround a large orange cup. It grows 18-20 inches tall.

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'Geranium': vibrant orange

It's "like little sparks in the garden," says Scott Kunst, owner of Old House Gardens Heirloom Bulbs in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The orange cup is sunproof, staying vibrant day after day. "The orange really holds up to the Midwestern sun," Kunst says. It grows 18-20 inches tall and is sweetly scented. "Enjoy the fragrance by planting a cluster near a doorway," Kunst suggests.

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'Mondragon': yellow-orange split

Called a split-corona daffodil, this gorgeous flower features yellow petals that surround a flattened reddish-orange center. 'Mondragon' grows 13-17 inches tall and blooms in midspring.

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'St. Keverne': sunshine yellow

Thanks to the canary yellow color of this 2007 Wister Award winner, Scott Kunst says it's perfect to "plant in a spot where you need a burst of sunshine." Originally from Cornwall, England, it grows 16-18 inches tall.

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'Bravoure': bright and showy

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'Ara': popular for mass plantings

Pure-white petals surround a bright yellow trumpeted cup, making this showstopper especially visible at dawn and dusk. This daffodil is one of the most popular for planting en masse. Grows 12-16 inches tall and blooms midspring.

[Missouri Botanical Garden PlantFinder](#)

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'Ice Follies': Vigorous in the Midwest

This large-cupped daffodil blooms in early spring to midspring and features white petals with a yellow cup that turns creamy white as it matures. It grows 16-18 inches tall and is especially good at perennializing -- developing into larger clusters over the years.

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Daffodil growing tips

Provide well-drained soil. Too much moisture can cause bulbs to rot. "Daffodils will take more moisture than most bulbs," says Scott Kunst of Michigan's Old House Gardens Heirloom Bulbs. But he recommends adding a handful of sand at the bottom of planting holes to aid drainage.

Site in the sun. Plant in areas that receive full sun to light shade; deep shade inhibits blooming.

Don't trim leaves. After the flowers have faded, keep the leaves. They provide extra growing power needed for next year's blooms.

Divide when flowers get smaller. Over time, one bulb becomes a clump of bulbs with smaller blooms. Divide every four or five years.

Mulch bulbs. Add a layer of shredded bark, straw or pine straw to regulate soil temperature.

Learn from pros. Get more information on growing daffodils from the American Daffodil Society (see link below).

[American Daffodil Society](#)

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Daffodil display

Midwest-hardy daffodils in the watering can include 'Mission Impossible', 'Tahiti Mondragon', 'Red Hill', 'Sugarbush', 'Pops Legacy' and 'Pink Silk'.

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Daffodil buying sources

If you're looking beyond your local garden center for bulb purchases, try one of these:

[McClure & Zimmerman](#), Friesland, WI (800) 883-6998

[Oakwood Daffodils](#), Niles, MI (269) 684-3327; e-mail oakwooddaff@hughes.ne

[Old House Gardens Heirloom Bulbs](#), Ann Arbor, MI (734) 995-1486

[John Scheepers](#), Bantam, CT (860) 567-0838

[Colorblends](#), Bridgeport, CT (888) 847-8637

Pictured: This vase holds 'Mission Impossible', 'Tahiti', 'Mondragon', 'Red Hill', 'Circle of Lemon', 'Pops Legacy' and 'Pink Silk'.

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