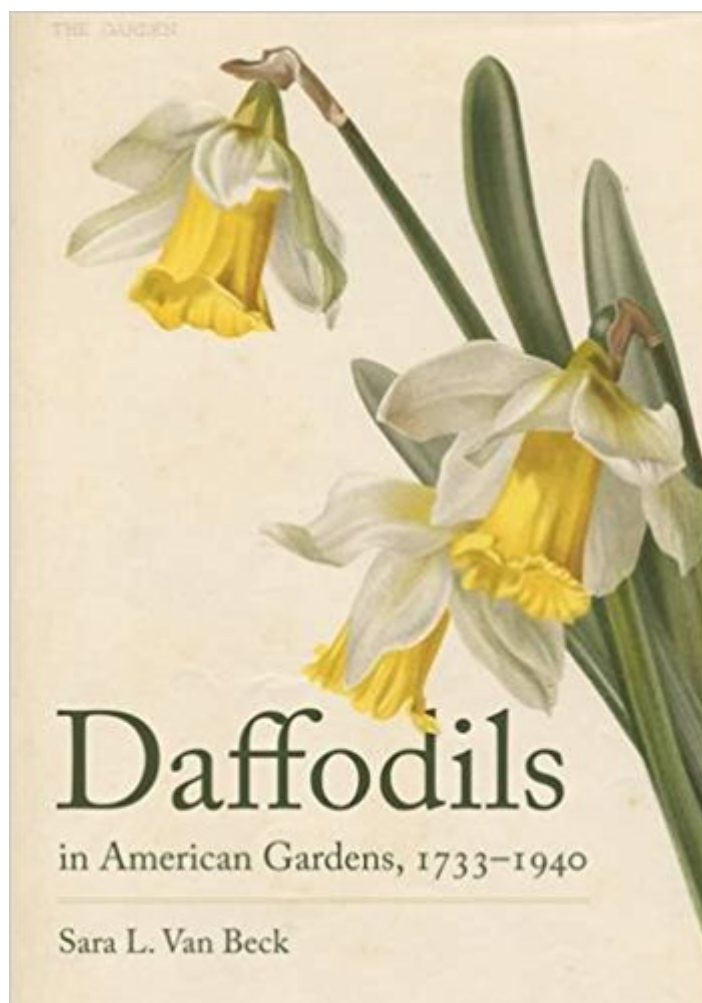


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# Daffodils In American Gardens, 1733–1940



## Synopsis

Since their earliest identification in the mid-1500s, more than twenty-eight thousand hybrid daffodils have been named and registered with the Royal Horticulture Society of England. Daffodils began as wildflowers in the Mediterranean basin, then spread and flourished in Europe's alpine and coastal environments. Sara L. Van Beck, an attentive historian and skilled horticulturist, traces the history of the garden daffodil including its early days in Europe, especially the Netherlands; the importation of flowering bulbs to colonial America; and plant breeding and the dissemination of plants throughout the United States until World War II. Illustrated with nearly two hundred color and black-and-white images, *Daffodils in American Gardens* examines gardening by era--European beginnings; colonial, federal, antebellum, and Victorian periods; and World War II--with a comprehensive chapter for daffodils in cemetery plantings. Van Beck combines the disparate disciplines of archaeology and plant science to discover and re-create important gardens in the United States. Combining primary research from a variety of rare publications, especially nursery catalogs and seed lists, she integrates old and new scientific botany by correlating older, uncertain scientific terms, common names for the daffodil, and modern taxonomies. Historic and modern botanical illustrations embellish the volume and complement Van Beck's narrative. Case studies of surviving historic gardens from the early Republic era to the twentieth century examine how old daffodils have survived the vagaries of time. Van Beck surveys historic properties in Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. This multifaceted history, examining high style, vernacular, and commercial landscape architecture, is geared toward general gardeners interested in heirloom plants and historic gardens. Moreover, extensive endnotes and a comprehensive bibliography document extensive references for professionals working in historic landscapes preservation and garden restoration.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"To say this beautifully researched book is simply about daffodils understates the enormity of the range of horticultural and social history it holds." --Susan Smith-Durisek (Lexington Herald-Leader)"One of our best-loved spring flowers, the daffodil has been grown for hundreds of years. Possibly the daffodil's finest virtue is its persistence, becoming a telltale of a long lost garden. Ever the meticulous researcher, Sara Van Beck relates the intriguing story of our beloved daffodil: how it got here and where it came from."--Gordon W. Chappell, Fellow, American Society of Landscape Architects and former landscape director, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation"Daffodils in American Gardens: 1733-1940 is a well-researched, hugely informative book that will thrill Narcissus aficionados. Van Beck explores not only horticultural development and dispersion of Narcissus from France, Italy, Germany, Holland, and England into America, but simultaneously provides insight into taste standards that fluctuated and greatly influenced American gardeners' plant material preference. It is a worthwhile addition to the bookshelves of avid gardeners, historic plant researchers, and garden designers alike."--Cari Goetcheus, associate professor, College of Environment and Design, University of Georgia"Daffodils in American Gardens is a book long needed--a comprehensive history of the American culture of daffodils. Both a plant history and an excellent chronicle of gardening in Europe and America, this story of the daffodil is intertwined with the history of major gardens and significant gardeners in America."--Joel Fry, curator, Bartram's Garden

Sara L. Van Beck, horticulturist and plant historian, is an officer of the American Daffodil Society and serves on the board of the Cherokee Garden Library at the Atlanta History Center. Van Beck has worked as a museum curator with the National Park Service and is the former president of the Georgia Daffodil Society. She is co-author of *Daffodils in Florida: A Field Guide to the Coastal South* and has written articles for the *Daffodil Journal*, the *Magnolia* bulletin of the Southern Garden History Society, and *Florida Gardening*.

I'm only two chapters into this but damn those two are packed with history --- not just of daffodils but

of horticulture in general. How did the 'new' trend of vegetable eating and an influx of Dutch lead to what became British gardening? Questions like that answered here. Great research, spectacular color plates, I'm in love with this.

Intensely informative on its subject, yet quite readable. Contains a myriad of fine illustrations and period photographs. Carefully and meticulously researched. Should be a permanent book in your library given the superb quality of its binding. Truly an heavy-weight book - both literally and figuratively.

Great book for everyone interested in daffodils, and a must for historic narcissus lovers!!! Physically, a very well made book.

This book is absolutey the best Daffodil Book published. Sara van Beck has researched and sustaniated every word she has written. One can spend hours and learn much with just Her notes and Bibliography Section.

great reference

Love it: Sara did great as usual

This is an excellent resource on daffodils. I'm only giving it 4 starts instead of 5 because it's a tad dry and academic. Having said that, though, it's more readable than many such books. It gives a tremendous amount of information and seems to be thoroughly researched. It also has some lovely illustrations of the different types of daffodils, historic gardens, etc. My personal opinion is that you can never have too many daffodils, so I really enjoyed the information and the illustrations. Note that it is a history book, not a book on how to grow daffodils. The information here on historical varieties, when they appeared in America (and where) is wonderful, though almost overwhelming in the sheer volume of it. However, the author did a good job of organizing the information by time period, to make it a bit easier to take in.

Beautiful book!

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