



Daffodil



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Latin: *Narcissus*

Irish: *Lus an chromchinn*

The daffodil is a perennial plant that flowers from early to late spring. It is a 'garden escape'. This is a plant that has 'escaped' the garden and grows in the wild.

There are at least fifty different species of daffodil. Thousands more daffodils have been pollinated by different plant species. These are known as 'hybrids'.

Habitat: It is found growing in clusters along roadsides, hedgerows, parks and wasteground.

Flowers: Like all other narcissi, this bright, sunny flower has a trumpet-shaped centre and is surrounded by a star-shaped ring of six petals. The trumpet is often a different colour to the petals. Some varieties have cream coloured petals with bright orange trumpets, while others have yellow petals.

Seeds: The seed pod of a daffodil is formed behind the head of the flower. When the flower begins to wilt, the pod will begin to turn brown and harden. It will eventually burst open to release the mature seed.

Leaves: When the flowers of the daffodil have died away, the leaves remain for another few weeks to store food for the next year. It is important not to remove the leaves before they wilt away.

Other: Daffodils were very popular flowers in Ancient Greece. According to Greek mythology, the flower is named after a young man called Narcissus. He became spellbound by his own image in a pool of water and eventually died from starvation and thirst. The narcissus, or daffodil, was the first plant to grow where he died.

'Daffodil itch' is a common skin complaint for florists. Hands can become dry, scaly and cracked. This is because of contact with the sap of daffodils which contains an irritant called calcium oxalate.