

THE LAWN DAFFODILS

The trouble is, it always starts with an innocent, off-hand comment such as “ooh, I like daffodils”. This was from the other half. It could mean one or more of:

1. I like pictures of daffodils
2. I like the smell of daffodils
3. I like daffodils from the supermarket
4. I like plastic daffodils
5. I like everything about daffodils, apart from the work required to have them in the garden.







The border on the right was made after the daffodils were naturalised, which is why one has to jump through the garden arch.

What he did not mean, of course, was:

7. "I like being dragged to the retail park on a bank holiday weekend, fighting the crowds to grab several bags of daffodil bulbs, having to pay for them myself (because t'other can never remember his credit card PIN) and then subsequently help plant them in the evenings, straight after work, in the half-light,

when it's freezing cold, because we bought too many, even when I said there would be too many and did anyone bother to listen?"

I am an expert at interpreting what my other half means when he says things, but I must confess to having dropped the ball (or bulb) on that occasion.



The bags of bulbs came to about two hundred daffodils that needed planting one autumn. At the same time, I also treated myself to a hand-held bulb planter.

Tip: they do not work in grass. It was unfortunate I found that nugget of information out after I sat down on my garden kneeling mats, wearing a coat, hat, gloves, scarf with a torch and a pile of bulbs to one side, ready to plant away.

Trying to use the hand-held bulb planter only succeeded in shredding rings of grass. A few of these later and I gave up, looked at the expectant pile of bulbs and wondered what to do.

Cue some head scratching and then a genius idea to use a spade to dig up square blocks of the lawn, excavate to the depth required, place the bulbs, backfill with fertiliser and compost and lay the turf section back on top for a perfectly level, smooth and seamless finish.

We managed it all apart from getting it level. Twenty square sections later and just walking from one end of the garden to the other (a journey all of a few metres) and you'll discover several attempts to wrench an ankle from the uneven surface. Several years later and it's a little better, but it'll never be a golfing green.

Daffodils are amazingly resilient to late snow and frost. Many times we have seen the display flattened, only to lift up again after thaw.



There's nothing quite like picking daffodils from the garden to brighten up a room and lift the spirits.

The story gets better because when the bulbs were first planted, they were in the middle of the lawn, with lots of room to walk around the outside and admire them. Unfortunately, I failed to take into account the borders that I would in time, expand outwards by several feet, as well as new sections of beds I would dig out. This means a simple walk across the lawn turns into a trip through an assault course as one steps over blocks of daffodils, under hanging basket

brackets, over borders and through arches all while avoiding the ever-encroaching roses. Trying to hang laundry on the washing lines that run through all this spring chaos is not for the faint of heart either.

If I were to naturalise grass with bulbs again, I would ensure that I have the final border lines, paths and walkways set and plant the bulbs well away from those. I would also try to remember my credit card PIN.

At least we now have daffodils every spring.