

Daffodils

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Daffodils are typically one of the first signs of Spring! So fellow gardeners are often very concerned about their daffodils and whether they will be able to enjoy them. I have had several people ask about whether the recent cold temperatures will hurt the daffodils that are just coming up from the ground and are somewhere between 3-5 inches. The short answer is: no, if the daffodil has no buds or blooms, then the cold temperatures will likely not affect the blooms this Spring, unless the foliage was damaged.

According to [GardenHelper.com](https://www.gardenhelper.com), if your daffodils are budding and showing any color and you expect freezing temperatures, then pick them and bring them into the house where they will open up. *Daffodils should always be snapped off, never cut or snipped!* Adding a mulch of dry leaves can be helpful if the temperature is expected to freeze for an extended period of time. If you have a variety of daffodil that you know is frost tender, make sure to cover your plants but make sure that you keep the cover off of the stems or you can create more damage than protection. Further, you will want to quickly remove the cover once the weather warms up so that you do not damage them with too much heat.

If the daffodils do not bloom this Spring there are a few possible causes that are not related to freezing temperatures. If you removed the green foliage around last year's daffodil flower too soon, then the daffodil likely did not absorb enough energy for this year's bloom. I certainly understand the desire to remove flowers that are past their prime, but that is just not an option with bulbs. For about six weeks after the last bloom fades, the foliage works hard, absorbing energy from the sun and channeling it into the bulb for next year's flowers. Cutting or mowing this foliage before it begins to turn yellow and die back on its own prevents that crucial work from happening, resulting in no blooms the next year. It can also be tempting to tie or braid the leaves together to make them look a bit more appealing, but that can reduce the leaves' efficiency at absorbing sunlight according to [Gardenerspath.com](https://www.gardenerspath.com).

You might also determine whether your daffodils are getting the same amount of sunlight that they used to receive when you first planted them. Our landscapes change over time and places that were once sunny in late winter and early spring may now be shady. This will have an

effect on your daffodils blooming as they need at least six hours of sunshine in late winter and early spring in order to bloom. Additionally, daffodils need good drainage. If your daffodils are not in a place that receives good drainage then this could ultimately cause your bulbs to rot.

If none of these things are happening in your yard then maybe your daffodils are just too crowded and need to be divided. Geneva Thomas, from the Smith County (Texas) Master Gardener Association, has a great article on division entitled “Dividing Daffodils” found on their website. Bulbs can be divided after flowering when the leaves start to turn yellow. Dividing while the leaves are still attached makes it easier to find the bulbs and to avoid damaging them while digging. To divide daffodils, dig all the way around the edge of a clump. Slide your shovel or hand tool under the clump, being careful not to wound the bulbs. After the clump has been lifted out of the ground, hold the leaves and gently shake the dirt off. Gently snap or pull the bulbs apart. Throw away any that are damaged or diseased. Replant your daffodils as soon as possible. Plant the bulbs individually, the same depth as before. Do not cut off the leaves as they are producing food for the winter and for next year's blooms; they will continue to turn yellow and fall off in a few weeks.

While daffodils are pretty easy to grow, they do require a bit of maintenance every couple of years. If you have any questions, you can call the Taylor County Extension Office at 325-672-6048 or email us at mgardeners@yahoo.com. We will do our best to respond to your questions. And as always, we hope that you will like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bigcountrymastergardeners>. And visit the Big Country Master Gardeners at www.bcmgtx.org for information and future events!