

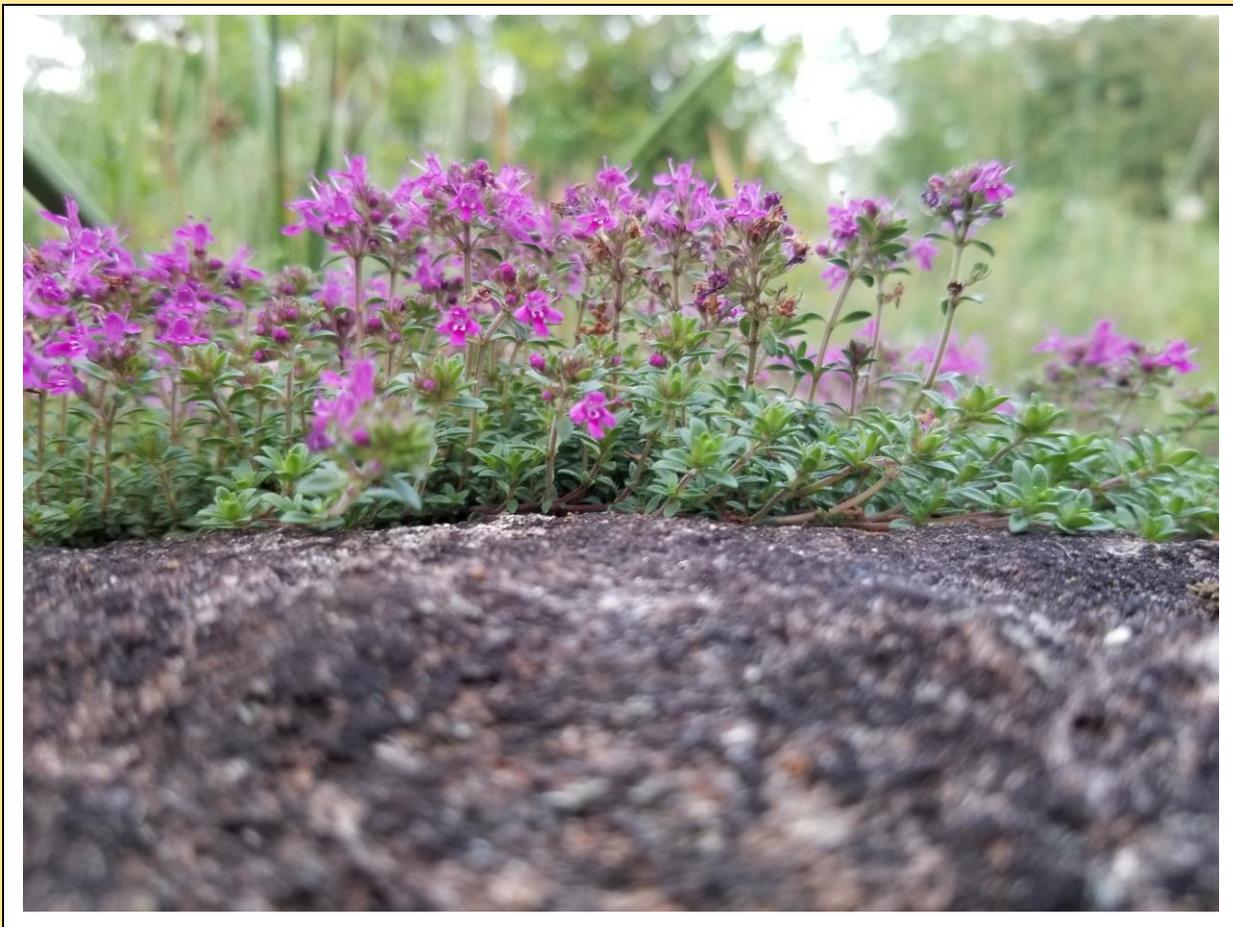
# Greg Freeman's Garden Chronicle



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***Thymus praecox* 'Coccineus', one of several thyme varieties marketed as "Mother of Thyme," is a dense, low-growing groundcover. Perfect for rock garden settings, it tolerates full sun and a reasonable amount of foot traffic. Popular among pollinators, the miniscule flowers of thyme are visited by everything from native wasps to tiny mason bees.**

While the global COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, I think it is safe to say that most places are in recovery mode. Vaccines are readily available in the USA, and I have had both of my Pfizer shots with no apparent side effects. In my corner of the world, life has returned to what one might call normal, but we all know that can change at a moment's notice. I am concerned that people might be letting their guard down too quickly, but I must admit it is quite invigorating to feel free to live once again.

That said, I had no daffodil shows to attend this spring. Major conventions, sporting events, concert tours and, yes, even flower shows are starting to fill calendars with future dates, and I look forward to the days when I can rejoin my fellow daffodil lovers in judging and exhibiting our favorite little flower. But lately I'm content to stay close to home.

This spring, I had some lovely flowers in my garden, and I tried my hand at a few crosses, but all of my harvested seeds were from open pollinated flowers. That is quite alright, I suppose. My heart was not really into daffodil hybridizing this year. As the caregiver for my mother, I knew her health was declining in some ways, but I did not realize how quickly her condition would deteriorate.

She was taken by ambulance to the hospital late in the evening on March 14 and admitted in the early morning hours. She and I would become quite familiar with the local hospital, as she would endure two more hospital stays and a couple of weeks in a physical rehabilitation facility throughout April and May. Just two days after returning home from the hospital on May 26,

she passed from this life into the next, but not before telling me at least seven or eight times throughout the day that she loved me. She was 84. We had just lost Dad a mere 18 months earlier. Old songs talk about being acquainted with sorrows. I can certainly relate to the lyrics of late.

I always wanted to name one of my daffodil hybrids after Mom. Her mother named her Edna Earl after the heroine in Augusta Jane Evans' 1866 novel, *St. Elmo*, but a daffodil by that name has existed for the better part of a century. Even Mom's nickname has been used to name a daffodil. So, I will have to be very creative when the time comes.

At any rate, I am keeping myself busy with writing, songwriting and other creative pursuits. I am also back on the American Daffodil Society's Board of Directors, having been elected for a three-year term as a regional director for the southeast region.

As we all embrace a new normal, or reclaim a semblance of what used to be normal, I hope to encounter you at a show or garden-related event. We, after all, share a special camaraderie. Considering all that we have been through, I think it is more evident than ever that we need each other. I hope to see you very soon! Happy Gardening!

***Greg Freeman, Publisher***

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## Bugle Call from Derbytown Louisville's Very Own Trumpet Honeysuckle

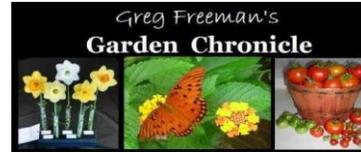
While native plants are starting to get more widespread attention because of their value for wildlife, there are still wonderful selections that remain overlooked or confined to a regional fan base. A good example of this is *Lonicera sempervirens*, (trumpet honeysuckle, USDA Zones 4-9, AHS Zones 9-1), which is beautiful and vigorous, but has a restrained growth habit unlike many of the non-native honeysuckles.

Native to the eastern United States from Connecticut to Florida, trumpet honeysuckle is evergreen in the southern part of its range and deciduous further north. Typical specimens of the multi-stemmed vine grow 15 to 20 feet tall with a diameter of three to five feet. The species has attractive pinkish-orange flowers that bloom over a two-month period in early to mid-spring and sporadically thereafter. Hummingbirds and night-flying sphinx moths regularly visit the flowers. Sparse clusters of reddish berries add further interest in late summer before they are devoured by songbirds.

A number of selections are available, including 'Magnifica'; 'John Clayton' (aka 'Sulphurea'), which has yellow flowers; and orange-red 'Major Wheeler'. But it's the lesser-known 'Blanche Sandman' that I recommend because its deep-rose flowers bloom heavily in May, and then reliably on and off again until the first heavy frost.

### Chance Encounter

I discovered 'Blanche Sandman' in 2011 when I exhibited daffodils at the East Tennessee Daffodil Society's show in Knoxville. A native plant



Be sure to check out [www.GregFreeman.garden](http://www.GregFreeman.garden) for original video content and other helpful information.



Greg Freeman

*Lonicera sempervirens* 'Blanche Sandman'

vendor had some small, potted ‘Blanche Sandman’ specimens, and I gladly handed over the five or six dollars she was asking for. I like to know the stories behind plant names, so I did some digging and discovered that ‘Blanche Sandman’ had been introduced by Allen Bush of the former Holbrook Farm & Nursery in Fletcher, North Carolina. A few years later, I was fortunate to connect with Bush, who at the time was director of special projects for Jelitto Perennial Seeds, based near Louisville, Kentucky.

According to Bush, a woman named Blanche Sandman, who owned a small backyard nursery near Louisville, propagated and sold this honeysuckle starting in the 1960s. “You’d see it planted on mailboxes and trellises all around town,” says Bush. Sandman was simply selling it as a trumpet honeysuckle, so Bush named it after her as a way “to distinguish it from others that were floating around in the trade.”

## **Garden Culture**

As with other trumpet honeysuckles, ‘Blanche Sandman’ thrives in rich, well-drained soil and full sun, although it adapts to other soil conditions and tolerates part shade. It’s best to provide a trellis, arbor or fence to support the vine, but I have seen it trained as a groundcover. If you don’t have a lot of space, you can easily keep the vine in check by cutting it back after the first heavy flush of blooms. Prune some of the stems each fall to help promote air flow and reduce susceptibility to powdery mildew.

If you decide you’d like to grow ‘Blanche Sandman’, it is readily available through retail and mail-order nurseries and has become a favorite passalong plant among gardeners.

This article originally appeared in the ‘Plant in the Spotlight’ column of the May/June 2018 issue of *The American Gardener*, the magazine of the American Horticultural Society.

## **How the Light Gets In**

Dealing with grief is never easy, and everyone takes the approach that might work best for them. Some people seek distraction while others, who are hurting inside, simply wear a smile. With the recent passing of my mother in May at a time when I was already dealing with the loss of Dad, I suppose my reaction to death has been somewhere in between staying busy and putting on a good front. I am spiritually grounded and have no doubts about seeing my parents again in Heaven, but as the “lonely, childless” – and not to mention, youngest – sibling in the family, I find myself feeling a bit more isolated and out of my comfort zone. After all, I was the primary caregiver to both my parents, and adjusting to life without the responsibility of taking care of them has even presented *its* challenges.

One might think that having more time to devote to creative pursuits would benefit me, but I have had a difficult time focusing. That said, things are getting better. I recently recorded a song for a music video project that is in-progress. I completed a short story that I have been working on – off and on – for close to ten years. And I am devoting more time to the projects within my Greg Freeman Media portfolio of websites. While I feel a great sense of loss, I know life must go on for those of us remaining. Interestingly, I now feel an even stronger motivation to pursue my goals and dreams. If I succeed, I feel it honors Dad and Mom for all that they instilled in me.

Still, death leaves one a bit broken, doesn't it? We are human, after all. We are all broken in some way, and I am the first to admit this old pot has been cracked quite a few times. I love the imagery of an old southern gospel song that says God doesn't throw away the clay. "Over and over, He molds me and makes me into His image, He fashions the clay..." Sometimes our brokenness is of our own making, typically resulting from our own mistakes. Sometimes we are broken by the circumstances around us, whether they be grief and sorrow or sickness and struggle. Brokenness and shame need not go hand in hand, but occasionally we do not like to admit that we need others to help us get through the challenge. There is no shame in reaching out. I suppose that's why I love the line in Leonard Coen's song, "Anthem," that says, "There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

I recently discovered through conversations and being on the receiving end of kind gestures that certain people are closer to us during these seasons of brokenness for the express purpose of letting the light in. Through the crackling veneers of our hearts, where joy and positive thinking have been overshadowed by sadness and negativity, these individuals shine the light by sharing a card or making a telephone call or dropping by for a visit. Among gardeners and plant lovers, the gestures often involve gifts of plants, bulbs or seeds.

On April 25, while my mother was enduring her second hospital stay, my church had a guest speaker: Reverend Ernest Ehabe of Cameroon. He was profound but entertaining, humorous yet enlightening. Quite frankly, I had never given the small west-central African nation of Cameroon much thought until Rev. Ehabe opened our eyes to the spiritual and economic adversities facing his homeland, which was ruled by France and Britain as recently as 1960 and 1961, respectively. Following the service, I was invited to join my pastor, Tim Sheriff, his wife, Michelle, and youngest son, Case, all close friends, as they treated our visitor (and me) to lunch.

I know the Sheriffs usually plant a big vegetable garden every year, and I am aware that Case is enthusiastically involved in the



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**Case Sheriff and Reverend Ernest Ehabe**

planting and harvesting of the garden, but I was quite impressed with the conversation that ensued as we munched on sandwiches and pizza at our local Schlotzsky's Deli. Case engaged his friend, Ernest, in conversation about growing all sorts of fruits and vegetables. Rev. Ehabe revealed that Cameroonians grow a lot of root vegetables, but he would like to acquire a variety of seeds and try growing different things back home in his country. Enroute to the restaurant, he and Pastor Tim had driven past a local retail plant nursery, and Rev. Ehabe seemed very interested in having a similar setup where he lives to provide both jobs and access to plants and trees from which a diversity of foods could be produced.

A month came and went, and Mom passed on May 28. Days later, an unexpected visitor came by to see me. Case Sheriff pulled into my driveway just as I had stepped outside to let the dog out for a bit. He handed me two small pots containing tomato plants and said, "Here's those sweet pea currant tomatoes I told you I was gonna bring you. You can even grow these in a hanging basket." During that lunch

with Rev. Ehabe, Case had mentioned growing the tomato plants from seed and promised to share some with me. I was intrigued that tomatoes could grow so small, much less thrive in a hanging basket, and I was anxious to try them. Case insisted that they are a lot of fun to grow. We enjoyed a fairly long visit, and I marveled at how I'd watched Case's brother, Wade, grow up. Now, Case, too, had grown into a young man and could probably throw me over his shoulder like a "sack of taters." I recalled how my friend, Sherry Volrath, and I had visited the Sheriffs days after Case's birth, and



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***Solanum pimpinellifolium* (sweet pea currant tomato)**

I remember holding him in my arms! Sixteen years after we welcomed Case into this world, he was visiting me just days after Mom crossed into the next. Those diminutive tomato plants, a species I later learned, were perhaps the excuse for the visit, but Case brought more than some plants that day. He brought a little light.

Not long after Case shared the *Solanum pimpinellifolium* plants, my friend Glenda Martin gave me some rooted specimens of orange mint. Having never grown a lot of mint, I was actually surprised to learn that such a mint existed. *Mentha x piperita* subsp. *citrata* is delightfully fragrant. Well aware that mints can spread rapidly, I think I will try some outside in the garden in a container and plant perhaps one specimen in my terrarium, *Mediterranea*. I look forward to watching the orange mint grow and spread to the extent that I have plenty on hand to try citrusy mint teas, create

a refreshing dessert or perhaps use it to garnish a savory dish. Glenda probably saw her gesture as a very small one, but it brightened my day and turned my attention to gardening if but for a brief while.

As I reflect on the last month, I realize that, in spite of feeling isolated and alone at times, there have been a number of individuals making efforts to lift my spirits. Those who brought me the plants, or shared some freshly picked squash, peppers and corn, only reminded me that we as gardeners can use our cut flowers, fresh produce, rooted cuttings or tender seedlings to put a smile on someone's face in difficult times. Brokenness manifests itself in different ways at different times, in seasons of bereavement and otherwise, but fortunately the cracks really do let in the light, and I am grateful. I can only hope that when occasions call for it that I am always poised to be a light of encouragement for someone else.



Greg Freeman

*Mentha piperita subsp. citrata*

## In a Pickle

What's in a pickle? Well, we know at the very least that there is salt and vinegar, but here in the American South where I live one cannot assume that all pickles are created equal. After all, even the assumption that all pickles are cucumbers is a false one. Southerners pickle all sorts of fruits and vegetables, with some opting for something dill-flavored and others aiming for a sweet or hot and spicy result. Therefore, there is no single go-to recipe. Dill might dominate the flavors where young, tender gherkins are concerned, but pickled watermelon rinds might call for ginger, and zesty pickled Brussels sprouts might require a heaping supply of dried cayenne pepper flakes.

In September 2020, my friend, Jaydee Ager, who had recruited me to serve as registrar for the American Daffodil Society’s Visionary Venture, a virtual fall forum, surprised me with a special gift. Waiting for me in the post one afternoon was a package containing a quart jar of her signature “limey” pickles. I couldn’t wait to taste them, and I was not disappointed! I still have some remaining in the refrigerator, and I can attest to their wonderful crunch and sweet, spice-infused flavor. I am a Southerner by birth, as is Jaydee, and I realize that anytime a Southerner shares something from the labors of their own gardening and home canning it is a great honor, indeed, to be the recipient.

As I thanked Jaydee, I just had to relate to her my own pickle-making experience from years ago. I am sharing it here *almost* verbatim, as some of what I told Jaydee could prove self-incriminating. It all began with my desire to exhibit at the Anderson County Fair, and the events that transpired are as follows:

Before I ever exhibited a daffodil, I entered a butterfly bush, some photographs and a jar of pickles at the 2003 Anderson County Fair here in South Carolina. The local Garden Club of America chapter (or was it a member club of the National Garden Clubs?) was holding the flower show. I was bitten by the show bug because my last-minute decision to enter a bloom of my favorite butterfly bush, *Buddleja* ‘Lochinch’, was third in a large class. It wasn’t until the following year in 2004 that I ordered my first serious daffodil cultivars from John Pearson in England, as opposed to buying mixed bags at Walmart. So, all of this laid a foundation for me to become an exhibitor, hybridizer and judge of daffodils; I just didn’t realize it at the time.

My two photographs barely caught the judges’ attention over in the art show.

But my pickles were something else. I was proud of them, although they were sweet enough to walk a mule to town and back backwards. I had hand-selected the cultivar, grown my own cucumbers from

seed, harvested the cukes and prepared the pickles using a “family heirloom” recipe shared with me by my elderly neighbors, who are now deceased. Mrs. Payne, a fascinating antiques collector and dealer and avid gardener, had talked up that recipe so much that you’d have thought I’d been entrusted with the nuclear codes. I felt special. My pickles, at least from my vantage point, were pretty, and they tasted awesome, even if they were extra sweet! To my shock, the judges did not taste



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**Chopped steak smothered with sautéed onions and mushrooms, served with French fries and Jaydee Ager’s delicious pickles, is a treat, indeed.**

any of the exhibits! The pickles were judged on appearances only, and I didn't even get an Honorable Mention. It is no exaggeration that I had spent many hours planting and caring for the cucumbers, preparing the pickles and even allowing them to sit in a crock for an extended period of time with a sachet of aromatic spices. My hard work had been rewarded with barely a glance and not even a tasting!

Now back to that recipe... Sometime later – well after the county fair, in fact – my mother ran across a church cookbook at a yard sale or thrift store and bought it on the spot. The cookbook had been put out by a local church as a fundraiser for some cause or another. Lo and behold, inside that cookbook was Mrs. Payne's coveted, top secret, copyrighted, patented, trademarked, "if I tell ya, I'll have to kill ya" sweet pickle recipe that had been handed down to her from her mother. It had been submitted to the cookbook by Mrs. Payne's sister, who was a member of that church!!!

I laughed so hard! And it gets worse. The next package of Mason jars I bought had a recipe book, and the recipe book offered up nearly the same recipe, except it recommended buying some prepared spice mixture as opposed to creating your own in a spice bag. Everything else was pretty much Mrs. Payne's recipe! Looking back, it's quite funny now, but I'm still proud of my pickles. Those judges just didn't know a rare jewel when it was staring them in the face!

This summer, if you find yourself slaving in the kitchen, using a secret recipe from your Aunt Beatrice or something you only recently discovered online, remember that cooking with love – the finest ingredient – will always win you the blue ribbon from those who appreciate your hard work and generosity. Besides, knowing what goes in a pickle is always better than being in one. Enjoy your canning.



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Visitors by appointment only.

*"I'm thrilled that my neighbor, Cheryl Murphy, has started a small specialty nursery, offering native plants ranging from azaleas to beautiful pollinator-attracting wildflowers. I've since added Echinacea pallida to my coneflower collection! If you're in the Oconee County, South Carolina area, check out her quality selection." – Greg Freeman*

## Life Lessons from a Hybridist

Plant hybridizing is a bit like sidling up to the roulette tables in Las Vegas or Atlantic City. One might think she knows the game. Another might assume “Lady Luck” is on his side. But in the end, the best of intentions and loftiest of dreams can result in disappointment. As a daffodil hybridist, I think I have been quite fortunate thus far. For one thing, several of my hybrids have taken awards at shows. Yet I shudder to think how stressed I might be if I were tasked with breeding plants for a living and felt the pressure to come up with the next multi-million selling petunia or a revolutionary thornless, ever-blooming rose in a kaleidoscope of psychedelic colors...on the same bush!.

In the December 2020 *Garden Chronicle*, I recounted how 2020, the mother of all difficult years in my lifetime to date, had brought record rainfall to my area. Precipitation is generally not a problem for my garden, especially in the summer months when it tends to be very hot and dry. However, the excess rainfall undoubtedly led to the demise of my prized silver leafed *Cyclamen hederifolium*, a plant acquired from Stephen Vinisky of Sherwood, Oregon, USA. The cyclamen had resulted from the best of parents from Sidney DuBose in Stockton, California and Mrs. Kathleen N. “Kath” Dryden VMH of England. The loss of the plant was a bit more bearable, thanks to the consolation of a young silver leaf specimen that had resulted from fallen seed and had emerged some two years earlier. As foliage of my jonquil daffodils began to emerge in late 2020 and others followed suit in early 2021, I took note of another possible casualty or two of the excessive rainfall.

### Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

In the May 2020 issue of the *Garden Chronicle*, I was delighted to share a photograph of the second-year stem of my daffodil seedling, GSF-07A-19-01 (‘Sugar and Spice’ x *Narcissus jonquilla*). The maiden bloom had appeared during the previous year, but the stem possessed only a single bloom. To my delight, the 2020 stem boasted multiple bi-colored blooms, and they were beautifully formed and rather elegant and fragrant. I was thrilled! After all, I had waited years, over a decade, in fact, to see the maiden bloom. However, it became evident when



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**GSF-07A-19-01**  
**(‘Sugar and Spice’ x *Narcissus***  
***jonquilla*)**

jonquil foliage began to emerge throughout the garden in late 2020 and early 2021 that this bulb was lost. As I dug down, I discovered that my seedling had withered away, and no trace of it was to be seen. I have several of its siblings, which have yet to flower, and time will tell if they measure up in quality. Either way, it is disheartening to reflect on the years of waiting for that first bloom only to lose the bulb entirely not long thereafter, but it is better for natural selection to carry out its responsibility and eliminate the weak or doomed rather than give me false hope.

### A Matador Casualty

When I first became serious about hybridizing and exhibiting daffodils, I shared some bulbs of the all-white double, ‘Rose of May’, with Dr. John Beck of Illinois and Mrs. Chriss Rainey near Washington, D.C., two well-known daffodil exhibitors, both of whom sent lots of bulbs my way in return.

One of the bulbs given me by Dr. Beck was an old poetaz called ‘Matador’. Poetaz daffodils, by the way, combine the ancestry of the species daffodils, *Narcissus tazetta* and *N. poeticus*. Not long after planting ‘Matador’, I was having a conversation with Sara Van Beck, an authority on historic daffodils and quite the repository of information on tazettas. She mentioned that ‘Matador’ is notorious for rotting in the American South. Sure enough, she was right! The ‘Matador’ bulbs never bloomed and completely dwindled away within a couple of seasons.

In the coming years, I made bulb purchases from Steve Vinisky’s Cherry Creek Daffodils. I started out with ‘Bright Spangles’, because of its lovely form and pod and pollen fertility. ‘Bright Spangles’ and its siblings, ‘Bright Sequins’ and ‘Bright Spot’, are the result of ‘Matador’ being open pollinated. Interestingly, I never made a successful cross with ‘Bright Spangles’ and ultimately lost the bulbs, but ‘Bright Sequins’, though slow to increase, has thrived in my garden for years, even finding its way on the table for Best in Show consideration in Nashville in 2013. Pollen from ‘Bright Sequins’ is said to be fertile, and I made a cross in 2008 with my best-formed *Narcissus jonquilla*. The resulting flower from this cross was previously discussed in both the April 2017 and May 2018 issues of the *Garden Chronicle*.

Known only by its number, GSF-09A-17-01, the *N. jonquilla* x ‘Bright Sequins’ flower featured broad, overlapping perianths (petals) with its maiden bloom, but its all-yellow coloring led Vinisky to speculate whether the *N. jonquilla* had simply self-pollinated. I dismissed this notion, because, in 2008 at the time of the cross, I had taken the time to remove the anthers of *N. jonquilla* before



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**GSF-09A-17-01**  
**(*Narcissus jonquilla* x ‘Bright Sequins’)**

dabbing on the ‘Bright Sequins’ pollen. I had wound up with just the one surviving seedling from the cross, but GSF-09A-17-01 won me the Miniature Rose Ribbon (the award for best miniature daffodil bred by exhibitor) at the 2018 East Tennessee Daffodil Society Show in Knoxville. Planted within inches of its seed parent, *N. jonquilla*, the seedling put up foliage every late fall just like the other jonquils, which further called its parentage into question. However, in late 2020, I observed that *all* of the *N. jonquilla* bulbs were sporting foliage, and GSF-09A-17-01 was nowhere to be found.

My seedling, GSF-09A-17-01, had joined the ranks of ‘Matador’ and its related cultivars ‘Bright Spangles’ and the unique, single-flowered ‘Singularity’, a Sidney DuBose cross between ‘Evenlode’ and ‘Matador’. They all have been planted in my garden and faded into oblivion...quite literally, in the case of my seedling. The only remaining ‘Matador’ descendants still thriving in my garden are ‘Bright Sequins’, ‘Falconet’ and an old Harry Tuggle seedling, known only by its number, 66-49. While the Tuggle seedling is purported to be both pollen and seed fertile, I am not sure if I will make any other hybridizing attempts of this kind.

### **So, Where Does the Blame Lie?**

While I am now pretty adamant about avoiding crosses involving ‘Matador’ descendants, I am well aware that natural selection is complicated. Any plant breeder is bound to produce something beautiful only to see it dwindle and die over time. Jonquil-type daffodils, for example, love a good summer baking and tolerate clay soils, which could explain why the aforementioned jonquil seedlings – one from a tazetta parent descending from ‘Matador, the other from a small-cupped daffodil – had lived for years and suddenly met their demise in a particularly wet year. On the other hand, that does not explain why quite literally *all* of their parents, *N. jonquilla*, ‘Bright Sequins’ and ‘Sugar and Spice’ are alive and well and apparently content in the garden. If the ‘Matador’ descendants are bound to fail in the American South, why do I still have ‘Bright Sequins’ and a couple of its close relatives? If *N. jonquilla* and jonquil hybrids relish a good summer baking in clay, why did multiple clones of the species, as well as hybrids ranging from ‘Quail’ and ‘Super Seven’ to ‘Intrigue’ and ‘Perpetuation’ take the rain in stride? As for ‘Sugar and Spice’, I must admit that few small-cupped daffodils currently live in my garden, because they infamously die within a year or so of planting! Yet ‘Sugar and Spice’ multiplies so readily that I have to dig it regularly and give some away!

If there is a lesson to learn from these disenchanting losses, perhaps it is simply to recognize that there are no hard and fast rules to plant breeding. And no one – not even the accomplished hybridists whom I wish to emulate – has all the answers. Furthermore, microclimates are invariably different, not only from garden to garden, state to state and country to country, but also from one corner of the garden to another. The hybridist’s task is to employ sound advice, knowledge and experience to produce something of great beauty, possessing certain desired traits or characteristics. In the end, if that is accomplished and the resulting plant is long-lived, one has succeeded. That said, sometimes a plant of beauty is produced, but it is not destined to stand the test of time. I suppose that as long as hybridists themselves persevere and stand the test of time, something quite remarkable is bound to emerge here and there, and that will surely make all the failures seem trivial. At least that is what I keep telling myself, as I stubbornly soldier on.



Greg Freeman

## Greg Freeman to Address Atlanta's Spalding Garden Club

On Friday, October 22, 2021, Greg Freeman is scheduled to present "Georgia on My Mind: Twelve Essential Daffodils for Georgia Gardens" to the Spalding Garden Club, a very active and enthusiastic garden club in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Remember, Greg is available for a limited number of speaking engagements each year.

Follow or subscribe to Greg Freeman at any of the social accounts below:



**Photograph: *Water Lilies at South Carolina Botanical Garden***



**Greg Freeman (b. 1974), *Water Lilies at South Carolina Botanical Garden*, 2007, Digital Photograph.**

In May 2007, my best friend, Sherry Volrath, planned an outing for a group of Sunday School kids at our church, and she enlisted my aid. I wound up driving the church van, helping with the chaperoning (code for keeping some rambunctious boys in line) and taking lots of photographs. The fun day included stops at nearby Clemson's beautiful waterfront Abernathy Park on Lake Hartwell and the South Carolina Botanical Garden, which is located on the campus of Clemson University. We had lunch near the park and the kids enjoyed the park's playground before we moved on to explore the expansive grounds at the gardens. I found the water lilies in one of the ponds irresistible. While it has been 14 years since that outing, I vividly recall thinking of French impressionist Claude Monet (1840-1926), as I photographed the pond lilies. It is only recently that I discovered that, just days after I photographed the water lilies at Clemson, one of Monet's famous water lily paintings fetched £18.5 million at Sotheby's in London on June 18, 2007. A Monet painting is well out of my reach, and I might not ever make the trip to Giverny where Monet's garden provided him with such inspirational views, but I have several water lily photographs to remind me of an adventurous day spent with friends and a great group of kids, who are all grown up now and starting to come into their own.

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In addition to being an avid gardener and daffodil hybridist, judge and exhibitor, Greg Freeman is an author, editor, recording artist, songwriter, amateur visual artist and life-long horse lover. His nonfiction writing on a number of subjects has appeared in magazines, encyclopedias and books of academic and scholarly interest, as well as [Southern Edition](#), Freeman's digital publication devoted to the American South. Published academic/encyclopedic contributions by Freeman include a chapter in Nadine Farghaly's edited volume, *Gender and the Modern Sherlock Holmes: Essays on Film and Television Adaptations Since 2009* (2015), as well as multiple entries in: *Race in American Film: Voices and Visions That Shaped a Nation* (2017), edited by Dr. Daniel Bernardi and Michael Green; *The British Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia* (2018), edited by Dr. Mark Doyle; and *Music around the World: A Global Encyclopedia* (2020), edited by Drs. Andrew R. Martin and Matthew Mihalka. In 2015, Freeman released a country music radio single, "Sunlight and Shadows," garnering international airplay, and his gospel music has received national exposure through television, radio and commercial recordings. His gospel EP, *Blessing and Blessing*, featuring guest vocalists Babbie Mason, a Grammy-nominated artist, and Gospel Music Hall of Famer Calvin Newton, released in December 2018. An owner of Belgian draft horses since 1987, Freeman's horse interests expanded into the world of Thoroughbred racing and breeding with the purchase of shares in Authentic in 2020. Authentic soon after won the Haskell Stakes, the Kentucky Derby and Breeders' Cup Classic before retiring to stud at Spendthrift Farm, Lexington, Kentucky, USA.

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**GREG FREEMAN**  
M u s i c

