

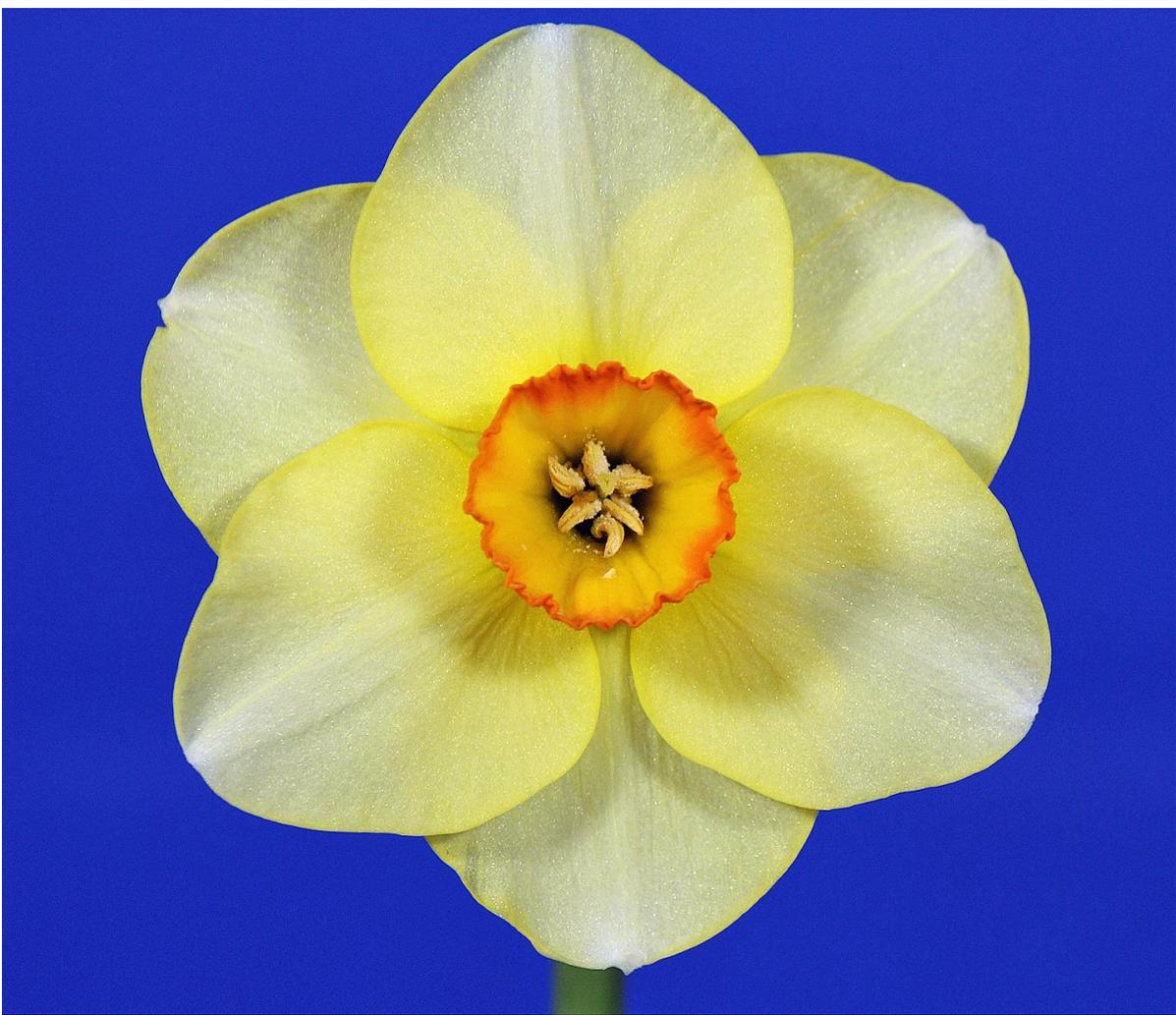
# Greg Freeman's Garden Chronicle



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## Hello, Gardeners!

What an interesting spring it has been so far. Here in my corner of South Carolina, we have had some extended periods of rain and cold. Now we are quite warm, as one would expect this time of year.

My daffodil crosses have not fared so well. I made several promising crosses early on that should have easily taken, but they failed to produce seeds. I am pleased to have collected seeds from a few late crosses and some flowers that were left to their own vices to set seed from open pollination. Perhaps my challenge this year was the fluctuation in weather. Downright hot and sunny on some days, chilly on others, near freezing at night. Not to mention overcast skies. I have observed through the years that my most successful daffodil breeding takes place on warm, sunny days that are accompanied by mild nights. And my arsenal of pollen in the freezer is not always as viable as fresh pollen from a prospective parent in the garden. Still, I pursue daffodil hybridizing with a passion, always hoping the next cross will produce something of great merit.

From my late crosses, I collected a solitary seed from a poet cross, and poet-type daffodils have the reputation for strongly disliking the American South. The late Eve Robertson (1906-2003) bred some quality poets in her South Carolina garden. Perhaps I can do the same. Natural selection will assist me in determining if the seedling will thrive. Seeds from another promising cross came from a fertile jonquil seed parent, using pollen from one of the seedlings I flowered last year. This cross could prove quite exciting among those of us who covet fertile jonquils.

And then there are all the other plants that call my garden home! I am looking forward to

planting some vegetables and herbs to go along with my flowering shrubs and perennials. I have

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already bought basil and parsley to join my thriving oregano, thyme and sage. Some additions of peppers, tomatoes, eggplant and melons will add the finishing touches.

As I share my own gardening experiences, I hope my insights can help you to garden more passionately and confidently. My explorations into cooking, art and history will hopefully spur additional interest. With that, I wish you the best this spring and summer. May your vases be filled with gorgeous flowers and your kitchen prove enticing with the aroma of freshly cooked vegetables and flavorful sauces!

*Greg Freeman*, Publisher

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##### *Narcissus* 'Scarlet Tanager'

Gold Ribbon (Best in Show) winner for exhibitor Lynn Ladd, 2018 East Tennessee Daffodil Society Show, Maryville, Tennessee, USA (Photo by Tom Stettner)

## 2018 Georgia Daffodil Show Highlights

Early spring-like conditions that led to earlier-than-normal daffodil blooms dictated that no daffodil show was held in the Atlanta area in 2017. By the time the 2018 show was held on March 10, I was still suffering from withdrawals. I had neither exhibited nor judged at a show in two years!

The Georgia Daffodil Society's show, the American Daffodil Society Southeast Regional event of 2018, was held at the beautiful Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell, an Atlanta suburb. The show was attended by exhibitors and enthusiasts from far and wide. Clay and Fran Higgins made an arduous trek from Eastern North Carolina. Tom Stettner came down from Cincinnati. Becky Fox Matthews, whose Tuggle Award-winning collection inspired awe in all of us, drove from Nashville. Dr. Mike and Lisa Kuduk ventured from the Kentucky Bluegrass. And Lynn Ladd came down from Knoxville. A splendid luncheon included chicken salad croissants and all the trimmings, as well as Darrin Ellis-May's tomato aspic and my own fig-walnut baklava (see [December 2016 issue](#) for recipe), which, thankfully, proved to be a hit with nary a piece left on the platter. The day was punctuated by great conversations and Jaydee Ager's fantastic humor.

While this might not have been our largest show in recent memory, I felt that the quality and variety of flowers were exceptional. It was a fine day for Clay Higgins, who won the Gold Ribbon

(Best in Show) with 'Temba' and the Rose Ribbon (best standard seedling) with his handsome bicolored 'Goldhanger' x 'Geometrics' seedling. Becky Fox Matthews not only exhibited the White Ribbon winner (best standard three stems) with 'Procyon', she also turned heads with her Miniature Rose Ribbon-winning seedling and the aforementioned Tuggle winner. The Tuggle Award, named after the late Harry Tuggle Jr., is given to the best collection of three stems each of twelve standard cultivars/species. It is a daunting prospect to exhibit such a collection,



Tom Stettner

**Former American Daffodil Society president Becky Fox Matthews is pictured with her Tuggle Award-winning collection, which also garnered the Award of Horticultural Excellence from National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the special Betty Hartzog Memorial Trophy, a Murano fire bowl presented and given by Tom Stettner.**

but Becky's entry was exemplary, garnering the National Garden Clubs' Award of Horticultural Excellence, as well as the first-time given Georgia Daffodil Society Betty Hartzog Memorial Trophy, a gorgeous Murano fire bowl donated and presented by Tom Stettner in memory of Betty Hartzog, who passed away in 2016.

My entries, all winning or placing, fared well, and I was pleased to have multiple single stem class winners with 'Hot Gossip', 'Mite' and 'Jeanie Driver', as well as the following:



Greg Freeman

For the first time, I exhibited a Bozievich Collection, and was delighted to win the class, which is named for the late Marie Bozievich, Fran Higgins' mother. Bozievich entries must contain twelve different cultivars/species from at least four Royal Horticultural Society divisions (i.e.-trumpet, large cup, jonquil, double). My entry included the following daffodils: Back row, L to R - Duncan seedling 3411 ('Lennymore' x 'Colourful'), 'Stoke Charity', 'Terminator', 'Intrigue', Tuggle seedling 66-49 ('Matador' x 'Soleil d'Or'), 'Tyrone Gold', 'Erlicheer'; Front row - 'Wild Women', 'Red Storm', 'Splatter', 'Pimento', 'Hot Gossip'.



Be sure to check out [www.GregFreeman.garden](http://www.GregFreeman.garden) for original video content, including an inspirational message to remind you to persevere when you feel like giving up.



Tom Stettner

**This intermediate (neither a standard nor a miniature in size) is ‘Jeanie Driver’, a topnotch pink-cupped daffodil from the breeding program of [Steve Vinisky](#), who resides just outside of Portland, Oregon, USA. Named after the late Jeanie Driver, a staunch intermediate enthusiast, this cultivar is of excellent form and texture, and is quite consistent in producing show worthy blooms. My entry, pictured here, was a blue ribbon winner and recipient of the Best Intermediate Daffodil award.**



Greg Freeman

**No other cultivar has netted me more blue ribbons than ‘Hot Gossip’! This daffodil consistently produces show quality blooms for me, and the color is excellent, even growing deeper with age when other yellow-oranges/reds burn and fade in the American South. Pictured is my first place vase of three, which was a strong contender for White Ribbon. I also won the single stem class with ‘Hot Gossip’. Incidentally, the second place winner in that class was my flower as well: a stem of Duncan seedling 3411 (‘Lennymore’ x ‘Colourful’). ‘Hot Gossip’ was hybridized by John Pearson of England.**

It was a pleasure catching up with friends, enjoying a competitive show and witnessing an Atlanta brimming with gorgeous redbuds and emerging tree foliage after a dismal winter. My thirst for daffodil fun and fellowship was quenched at last!

## Suburban Atlanta Gardeners Get the Low Down on Progress in Daffodil Hybridizing

There are distinct advantages to living within two hours of Atlanta. Firstly, one is in reasonable proximity to the world's busiest airport. And, secondly, one can enjoy all of the cultural institutions, major attractions and fabulous restaurants that only a major metropolis can generally provide, and residency is not required. My location proved advantageous a few months ago when I received an invitation from Mrs. Virginia Schofield to speak at the March 19 meeting of the [Gwinnett County Master Gardeners Association](#). Gwinnett County, though outside the confines of Atlanta's city limits, is Georgia's second most populated county, with well over 900,000 residents. Vast development has drastically changed Gwinnett's landscape in my lifetime alone, and I was pleasantly surprised to learn that a number of suburbanites take their gardening quite seriously and are always seeking to improve their skills, beautify their community and, when necessary, rescue plants from what most of us have reluctantly learned to call progress.

My friend, Sara Van Beck, the author of *Daffodils in American Gardens, 1733-1940* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), had told me in advance that she had been called upon first to give a talk, but she would be indisposed that evening and had kindly recommended me as an alternative. Traffic is the deciding factor, of course, but, ironically, I am probably capable of reaching Gwinnett County (located on Atlanta's northeast side) faster than

Sara, who resides in Midtown Atlanta. So, in the end, it worked out reasonably well.

"A Century of Daffodil Hybridizing: Using Advancements in Color, Form and Size to Advantage" was the title of my presentation, which incorporated both a slideshow of photographs and narrative text, as well as fresh flowers from the garden for a more genuine show-and-tell experience. Among the flower stems I brought in tow were 'Stoke Charity', 'Erlicheer', 'Terminator', 'Splatter', 'Beryl', 'Sammy Girl', 'Kokopelli', 'Mesa Verde', 'Telamoniun Plenus', *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* and *N. jonquilla*.



Greg Freeman

**The Atlanta Botanical Garden, overshadowed by Midtown's office towers and hotels, is one of many great destinations for plant lovers throughout the city and its environs.**

As I began my talk, I had everyone say a line from my slideshow in unison: “It is important to remember that one need not be crazy to breed daffodils, but it helps.” Of course, this prompted uproarious laughter, but it served as an icebreaker and segue into the crux of my message. I went into the presentation hoping to expound on the advancements daffodil hybridists have made in the last hundred years and how these strides have afforded daffodil lovers longer blooming seasons, healthier bulbs and more varied colors and sizes. I did not, however, expect to recruit anyone to join me in the formidable quest to breed better, more exciting daffodils, but one attendee was smitten with ‘Stoke Charity’ and asked if she could take my flower stem with her to use its pollen on a flower at home. I replied, “Absolutely!” as I tried not to beam too proudly!

The talk was well-received and well-attended with 60-70 individuals in attendance, many of whom

asked great questions throughout the presentation and took time to talk with me at length afterwards, in spite of a pending thunderstorm.

Gwinnett County Master Gardeners are a far cry from the stereotypical stuffy yuppies who are often associated with suburban living. Rather, the gardeners whom I encountered represented an array of ages (although most were retirees) and backgrounds, and I could not have addressed a more keen, inquisitive, hospitable audience. It was a memorable evening, highlighted by a delicious meal and great fellowship spent among plant lovers. Best of all, I had the pleasure of discussing my favorite plant with an audience who appreciated my passion, and expressed budding interest in adding to their daffodil collections and expanding their knowledge of daffodil breeding.



Greg Freeman

**Freshly picked stems of *Narcissus* ‘Kokopelli’ were popular ‘show-and-tell’ samples among Gwinnett County Master Gardeners. Its diminutive size and distinctive fragrance were much admired. In my South Carolina garden, this Bob Spotts introduction is a miniature, but that it is not the case in other regions of the country, hence its absence from the American Daffodil Society’s official list of miniature daffodils.**

## The Pleasure of Owning a Fine Plant

In his acclaimed book, *Adventures of a Gardener*, Sir Peter Smithers (1913-2006)—“who helped provide the model for 007” (*Financial Times*, 2018), Ian Fleming’s fictional James Bond—stated, “The pleasure of owning a fine plant is not complete until it has been given to friends” (p. 3). That quote has certainly stayed with me. I always appreciate the plants that are given to me more than those that I purchase from faraway places and specialty catalogs, but not nearly as much as the experience of sharing plants with someone who truly appreciates a great addition to the garden.

That said, to my delight, Ruth Fisher, a friend and fellow avid gardener in my local area whose lush, colorful flower beds inspire greatness in any plant lover, shared a potted *Clivia miniata*, with me in August 2015. Clivias are native to the land of her origins: South Africa. In fact, her clivia bulbs had resulted from seeds she had brought with her to the States from South Africa, and this is a point of interest that distinguishes my plant from those offered at my local supermarket’s florist counter.

Best suited for use as a houseplant, clivias are not cold hardy. While certain clivia cultivars are highly collectible among the fabulously wealthy, and some hybrid specimens fetch thousands of dollars, *Clivia miniata* is not particularly rare or exceedingly expensive. It is, however, useful to hybridists, and the beautiful plant has received the prestigious Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

My potted bulbs enjoy spending time in my garden outdoors each summer and early fall until the threat of frost, and then I bring them indoors for protection until the following year.

On March 23, 2018, just before I left for Knoxville to exhibit at the East Tennessee Daffodil Show, Ruth dropped by to pick up a large specimen of *Crinum x powellii* ‘Album’ I had dug for her. I first met Ruth, a physical therapist, several years ago when she was assigned to my mother’s home healthcare team following a hospital stay. She later became a client of my family’s upholstery business. And we have since discovered mutual interests in horses and gardening. Ever since she gave me the *Clivia miniata*, I had promised to share my crinums with her. Some crinums, like



By JMK, [GFDL](#)

*Clivia miniata*, with flowers and fruit, presenting a lovely display in Manie van der Schijff Botanical Garden, Pretoria, South Africa

clivias, are also native to South Africa, and I had noted that her beds of flowers contained an eclectic mix of perennials and blooming shrubs, but were devoid of crinums. I figured that it is only proper that a native South African living in South Carolina get to enjoy some cold hardy crinums.

My bulbs of *Crinum x powellii* ‘Album’ were dug in 2010 from the yard of Mrs. E. S. Owens, a Seneca, South Carolina woman who had passed away two years earlier. With permission from Mrs. Owens’ relatives, I dug just a few bulbs, but they have since increased prolifically. Bred by British hybridist, C. B. Powell, *Crinum x powellii*—a cross between *Crinum bulbispermum* (formerly known as *C. capense*) and *C. moorei*—was first marketed commercially in 1881 by Messrs. E. G. Henderson & Son, Pine-apple Place



By Zebruno, [GFDL](#), [CC-BY-SA-3.0](#)

***Crinum x powellii* ‘Album’, C. B. Powell’s well-known introduction, has become a popular pass-along plant.**

Nursery, London. Even a century ago, the plant was being praised by the horticultural press. Writing for *Irish Gardening* in 1907, R. M. Pollock described the *C. x powellii* and *C. x powellii* ‘Album’ in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, Dublin, Ireland, as “exquisite pink” and “beautiful pure white,” respectively, adding, “At present a group of these pink and white forms are in bloom in these gardens, and look very happy in a position they thoroughly enjoy—*i.e.*, at the base of a sunny wall” (p. 161). All these years later, *Crinum x powellii* ‘Album’ has become a popular pass-along plant in the American South. The bulbs are tolerant of cold in the southernmost regions. *Crinum x powellii* is said to be sterile, but some crinum breeders have reported success using its pollen. I have never made any crinum crosses, and cannot attest to this suggestion firsthand.

Nonetheless, Ruth Fisher and I have discovered that Sir Peter’s words ring true. And, yes, the happiest people in life are the givers and not the takers, but it sure is pleasant to be on the receiving end of another’s generosity, especially when it comes to receiving another botanical treasure from the garden of a friend.

Pollock, R. M. “Crinums in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin,” *Irish Gardening*, Volume II, No. 11. January 1907.

Smithers, Peter. *Adventures of a Gardener*. London: The Harvill Press with The Royal Horticultural Society, 1995.

“Sir Peter Smithers, model for 007, dies at 92.” *Financial Times*. “Sir Peter Smithers, model for 007, dies at 92,” *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/d59c413e-fbd6-11da-b1a1-0000779e2340>. Accessed 30 April 2018.

## Discovering a Taste of India in Knoxville

Because of family and personal obligations, it is not often that I get to visit out-of-the-way places or explore something entirely different, particularly cuisines inspired by various locales from around the world. When I do, it is generally while I am traveling solo. The pressure to please family members or friends is non-existent, and it is simply chalked up as a lesson learned if the overall experience proves to be less than expected or utterly disappointing.

Upon arriving in Knoxville on March 23, the day before my East Tennessee daffodil show, I was tempted to comb through local restaurant guides or pore over websites for a good Italian restaurant. With my hotel located across from the McGhee-Tyson Airport in Alcoa, I was restricted to the typical chain restaurant fare nearby, or I could venture toward Knoxville or Maryville in search of something out of my comfort zone at a locally owned establishment or someplace uniquely international. As much as I love to get my chicken parmigiana fix from time to time, I decided to do something I had wanted to do for ages: try Indian food.



Greg Freeman

### An Altogether New Experience

Within minutes, I discovered [Bombay Palace](#) on a list of Knoxville area restaurants provided by my American Airlines AAdvantage Dining program membership. Through this points-earning scheme, I have learned of many exciting restaurants and earned a modest number of airline miles each time I have dined with them. Bombay Palace was well-recommended by reviewers, and the menu proved to be as enlightening as it was appetizing.

Once I had decided what to order, I phoned the restaurant from my hotel room. The wait time on the food was around twenty minutes, which was perfect for my drive of fifteen miles or so. I asked for chicken biryani, a dish deeply rooted in India’s Muslim past that is believed by some to have been brought to the subcontinent from Persia by India’s Mughal rulers. Infused with spices and saffron, the chicken was to be served with basmati rice. To accompany the biryani, I had

requested an appetizer of pakoras (fried vegetable fritters). These choices seemed tame enough for a first-time dining experience. The young man on the other end of the line proceeded to ask me how spicy I would like my food, and this prompted flashbacks of ordering from my favorite Thai restaurant in Greenville, South Carolina, where I am asked the same question. There, even the lowest number on a scale of one to ten winds up blazing a trail throughout my digestive tract! So I replied, “This is my first time having Indian food. Let’s keep it mild so it doesn’t turn out to be my last.”

When I reached the restaurant at 10901 Parkside Drive, just off Kingston Pike near the confluence of Interstates 40 and 75, I observed a jam-packed parking lot and a dining room filled with a wide-ranging group of patrons as varied as hip college-aged kids and baby boomers decked in their smart, dressy casual attire. Everyone appeared to be caught up in engaging conversations, and the food was merely the common denominator that kept them lingering and, no doubt, returning for more. Making my way to the bar, I was greeted by a strikingly handsome young chap who asked, “Did you call in an order?” “Yes,” I answered. “You’re Greg? Yours is ready now.” Smiling, the young man asked, “Your first time having Indian food, you say?” “Yes, and I can’t wait. Everything smells so good!” With that, he shamelessly remarked, “Indian food is the best; you will love it,” as he gathered four or five different cups of dipping sauces, explaining what each one contained and how it might go with my meal. All of the condiments, he added, were complimentary since it was my first time having Indian food.

Back at the hotel, I tuned into the local PBS television station and began munching on my dinner. The pakora appetizer was quite good, although I determined that I did not particularly care for the yogurt-based dip. The other condiments were wonderful. The aromatic rice seemed like the perfect companion for the chicken, and indeed the flavors did remind me of my dining experiences at the Thai restaurant back in Greenville, but certain aspects of my dinner made it distinctly different. I have concluded that author Pratibha Karan did not employ hyperbole when she wrote, “The magic of biryani lies in the way rice is transformed into something ambrosial—absorbing the rich flavours of meat and spice, scented with the dizzying aromas of saffron, rose, jasmine or screwpine; the white grains taking on a gem-like mien” (Karan, 2017).

Since I was particularly fond of the pakoras, I wondered how one might go about making some back home. As I mopped up the last drops of chutney with a floret of fried broccoli, I thought of a scene in *The Jewel in the Crown* – the 1984 television mini-series with which, I confess, I am obsessed – when the English girl, Daphne Manners (Susan Wooldridge), dines with Hari Kumar (Art Malik) and his aunt, Shalini Sengupta (Kamini Kaushal). Gingerly eating the spicy food with her fingers, Miss Manners takes small, polite bites and chews slowly to the slight chagrin of Mrs. Sengupta, who perhaps feels that Miss Manners should enjoy her food more heartily. With this thought, I pondered how much better my meal, though far from bland, might have been if I had asked for just a bit more spice.

At any rate, the young gentleman at Bombay Palace had gone out of his way to make my experience a pleasant one, and I was rewarded with a memorable supper that left me craving more Indian food in weeks to come.

## **Dreaming of Pakoras**

My desire to make pakoras did not wane with the passing of time, and I began planning a homemade Indian-influenced meal of my own. After multiple shopping trips to various supermarkets and grocery stores, including Ingles, Aldi and BI-LO, I finally felt that I might have

to order most of my ingredients from specialty sources. It wasn't until I made a trip to Greenville that I discovered I could, in fact, find my needed items within reasonable driving distance. A trip to Cost Plus World Market® proved somewhat profitable. There, I bought Tandoori masala and coriander seeds. When I inquired about chickpea flour (gram flour to much of the world), an employee shook her head to my disappointment and suggested I go across the street to Whole Foods Market. As it was my first time shopping there, I immediately fell in love with Whole Foods and its eclectic selection. I found a jasmine-infused rice, a wonderful spicy, plum chutney and an array of other interesting items related to Indian cuisine, but I could not find gram flour. I had almost given up on locating the elusive ingredient when I spotted an employee and asked for assistance. Fully expecting a blank stare or an "I've never heard of that" reply, I was surprised when he directed me to follow him one or two aisles over where he pointed to garbanzo bean flour. It was neither located with the Indian foods nor labeled as gram flour, but I soon learned that chickpea flour is chickpea flour whether one describes it with a British term (gram) or a Spanish-influenced American label (garbanzo). The last remaining bag had a tiny perforation, and the employee even marked the package and instructed the checkout clerk to let me have it free of charge!

Pakorras in Knoxville had been devoured as an appetizer, but my plan at home was to make them a focal point of my forthcoming, Indian-inspired meal. Quite often served as a snack in India, pakoras are great for all sorts of occasions, including a good old-fashioned English tea. In his book, *Darjeeling: The Colorful History and Precarious Fate of the World's Greatest Tea*, Jeff Koehler writes:

Bought on a railway platform during a stop of the Darjeeling Mail on its journey north from Kolkata to NJP station outside Siliguri, in one of the roadside tea shops on the curvy and much-patched road up into the hills, or for afternoon tea in Darjeeling itself, crispy, deep-fried *pakorras*—also known as *bhajia*—are a favorite snack with tea (p. 240).

In hindsight, a cup of Darjeeling tea would have gone superbly with my meal, but when I finally found the time to prepare my Indian food—on a Sunday after church, several days after buying the ingredients—I opted for a brew of what I had on hand: Ceylon tea, an orange pekoe blend from my favorite tea company, Twinings of London. I supposed Sri Lankan-sourced tea could work when no Indian tea is in the cupboard, and the Ceylon tea went very well with my jasmine rice and Tandoori masala-seasoned chicken. As for the pakoras, I added a minced chili pepper, a beaten egg and other seasonings with the chickpea flour—which, by the way, is naturally gluten-free—to create a batter in which I coated broccoli florets, quartered onion layers and pods of okra for frying. The resulting meal, though not nearly as memorable as my dinner at Bombay Palace weeks earlier in Knoxville, was tasty and very satisfying. The plum chutney was an ideal sweet-spicy contrast to the rice and pakoras.

As a gardener and increasingly venturesome cook, I will continue to develop my skills in preparing Indian food. Perhaps I will soon graduate to trying curries, and the addition of some chili peppers, fragrant herbs and various vegetables to my garden should add freshness and flavor to any meal, whether it is inspired by the Indian subcontinent or otherwise. Meanwhile, I am

**Prepare your own exciting pakoras with homegrown vegetables such as Black Beauty eggplant, Clemson spineless okra and giant Thai peppers. Seeds are available from my friends at Heavenly Seed. Just click below:**

[\*\*HEAVENLY SEED\*\*](#)

looking forward to returning to Bombay Palace next spring (if not sooner) when I go to Knoxville for another daffodil show. Knoxville, often described as the “Gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains,” provided me with a new dining destination and a gateway to a world of culinary explorations never before experienced.

Karan, Pratibha. *Biryani*. Haryana: Random House India, 2017.

Koehler, Jeff. *Darjeeling: The Colorful History and Precarious Fate of the World’s Greatest Tea*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2015.

## **Rain Fails to Dampen Enthusiasm at East Tennessee Daffodil Show**

The East Tennessee Daffodil Society’s annual show, held on March 24, faced some challenges this year. A change in venue, cold, rainy conditions and conflicting events probably all had a hand in keeping participation lower than normal, but Lynn Ladd’s place of worship, First United Methodist Church of Maryville, was a lovely setting for a daffodil show, and those who attended had a great time. Some of the same exhibitors/attendees—Tom Stettner, Bonnie Campbell, the Kuduks, Molly Adams and, of course, Lynn Ladd—who had helped make the Atlanta show a success two weeks earlier were on hand to ensure that serious aficionados and curious visitors alike could enjoy our favorite little flower to the fullest.

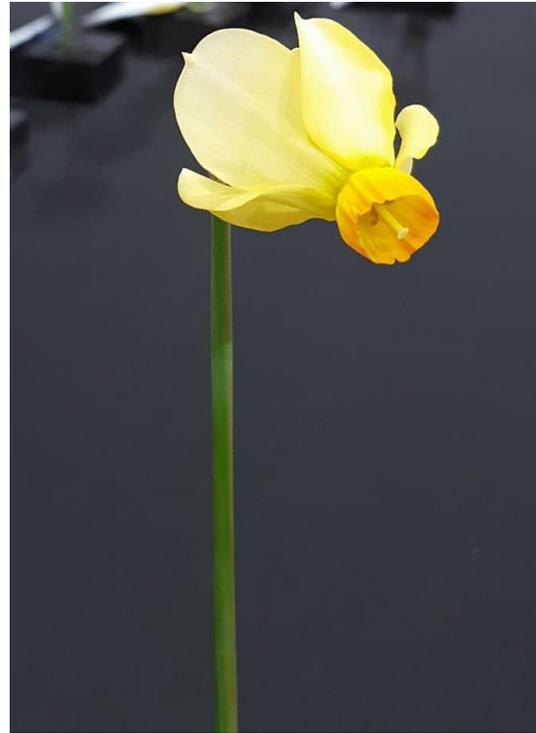
A regular vendor at the Knoxville show, [Brian White](#) offered a good selection of plants and trees, as well as hypertufa containers. Brian and I had a great conversation about our plant hybridizing aspirations, and his words of advice were much appreciated, particularly where dealing with certain plant breeder agents and nursery companies are concerned. It is not often that I encounter someone who shares my interest in plant breeding and with whom I can “talk shop.” Brian’s display is seen at various Knoxville area events, including farmers’ markets and horticultural shows, throughout the year, but anyone within reasonable driving distance would be well-advised to pay his nursery a visit. His offering of hostas is impressive, and Brian is very helpful and insightful, whether addressing the novice or gardening expert.

Overall, entries for the daffodil show were sparse. Of my own thirteen entries, nine were first place winners, with the remaining four taking second. Some classes were pretty competitive. Others contained only a single entry. While judges are not required or always inclined to award a blue ribbon to a lone entry in a class, it goes without saying that any serious exhibitor desires to win against serious competition. That said, most of the intense competition in the Knoxville show was among class winners in contention for special American Daffodil Society ribbons such as White Ribbon (best three standard stems), Historic Ribbon and the coveted Gold Ribbons for standard and miniature bests in show. I was pleased to have strong contenders for White Ribbon and Miniature Gold Ribbon, and my own jonquil seedling, the only miniature seedling in the show, was awarded the Miniature Rose Ribbon (given to the best miniature seedling, or best unnamed mini daffodil bred by exhibitor, in the show). Following are some of my Knoxville winners:



Greg Freeman

**'Stoke Charity', 1<sup>st</sup> vase of three**



Greg Freeman

**'Beryl' (pre-1907), a class winner, continues to win at daffodil shows globally when many older daffodil cultivars have been superseded by newer introductions.**



Greg Freeman

**'Forged Gold', 1<sup>st</sup> in class, is a 2012 introduction from my friend, Nial Watson, at Ringhaddy Daffodils, Northern Ireland.**



Greg Freeman

**'Intrigue', a class winner, is a strong competitor at daffodil shows, in general. This is also a wonderful garden flower!**



Greg Freeman

Here is Bankhead seedling 02-7-25 in the garden just a few days prior to the Knoxville show.



Greg Freeman

Bankhead seedling 02-7-25, winning its class at the 2018 East Tennessee Daffodil Society Show

This remarkably stunning tazetta seedling was bred by the late Delia Bankhead, whom I never met, in spite of her close proximity to where I live. A resident of Hendersonville, North Carolina, USA, from 1996 until her death in 2009, Ms. Bankhead was renowned particularly for her miniature daffodils. By all accounts, she was a staunch promoter of daffodils, an accomplished hybridist and a brilliant gardener...a great loss to the world of daffodils. I regret that my serious involvement in daffodils began in earnest during Ms. Bankhead's final years. No doubt, I could have learned so much from her. Bankhead seedling 02-7-25, a class winner and serious contender for Miniature Gold Ribbon (miniature Best in Show) in Knoxville, came into my possession from Mrs. Suzy Wert, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. After I shared some bulbs of a fabulous Sidney DuBose jonquil with her, she pleasantly surprised me by sending a bulb or two of this yellow-pink-cupped jewel! Perhaps the most beautiful miniature daffodil in my garden, I am beyond thrilled to be growing this delightful and most assuredly rare Bankhead flower!



Greg Freeman

Discussed in the [April 15, 2017](#) issue of *Greg Freeman's Garden Chronicle*, this seedling, GSF-09A-17-01, a cross between *Narcissus jonquilla* and 'Bright Sequins', is a product of my own breeding. It is pictured here at the Knoxville show where it was awarded the ADS Miniature Rose Ribbon, for best miniature bred by exhibitor in the show. The maiden bloom in 2017 was much better, and this flower had already reached its peak by the time the Knoxville show was held this year. Nonetheless, it is a promising jonquil, offering slightly larger, broader florets than the species. The maiden bloom displayed excellent overlap of the perianths, and it is hoped that this trait will become a more consistent attribute.

"Obituary: Delia Bankhead (1932 – 2009)," *The Daffodil Journal*, June 2009.

## Planning *and* Planting for Old World Flavors

Anyone who has read my garden writing for any length of time knows that I especially enjoy growing and eating heirloom vegetables. There is something particularly gratifying about preserving and preparing these botanical and culinary historical treasures, and the often alluringly exotic names some varieties bear seem to transport me to places I might never visit but can vividly imagine or discover through informative books, websites devoted to food and culture and generous doses of *Rick Steves' Europe*.

I have neither forsaken some of my favorite seed sources, namely [Heavenly Seed](#) and [Nichols Garden Nursery](#), nor abandoned vegetable varieties about which I have previously written, such as Zucchini 'Ronde de Nice' and Eggplant 'Rosa Bianca'. Still, I could not resist the abundant offerings from Bantam, Connecticut-based [John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds™](#) when the catalog arrived in the mail. With the exception of *Echinacea paradoxa* and a miniature basil, all of my seed purchases from Scheepers were heirloom vegetables from Europe, more specifically France and Italy, as described with excerpts from the Scheepers catalog below:

### **Artichoke 'Violetto di Romagna'**

Described in the 2018 Scheepers catalog as a "traditional heirloom from Italy's northern Emilia-Romagna province, it produces scads of 3"-wide, oval, deep violet and green artichokes with little if any inedible choke when picked young and tight" (p. 2).

Europeans love a good festival! Considering that villagers and small town residents will gather along streets and countryside roads with wine goblets and artisan cheese in hand just to catch a glimpse of the peloton of the Tour de France or Giro d'Italia cycling races, it should come as no surprise that entire festivals are devoted to artichokes. A number of Italian *carciofo* (artichoke) festivals are held, including the *Sagra del Carciofo di Cerda*, on the island of Sicily, the *Festa di Carciofo di Chiusure* in the hill town of Chiusure, near Pienza and the hugely popular *Sagra del Carciofo Romanesco*, held in the seaside resort town of Ladispoli, not far from Rome. Even the Greeks enjoy the festivities, holding various events, including one of note at the central square in Komi, a village on Tinos Island. Outside the parameters of Europe, other Mediterranean locales celebrate their artichoke harvests, including Urla with its international artichoke festival on the Aegean Sea in Izmir, Turkey.

If my artichoke harvest proves as good with herbed bread crumb and cheese stuffing as I expect, I might throw a festival of my own!

### **Petit Pois 'Iona' (Iona pea)**

Billed as "the authentic petit pois," Scheepers describes this French pea as "the top pick of gourmet French chefs, bestowing clusters of 3"-to 4"-long pods on high-yielding 2' vines that require structural support" (p. 3).

I suspect this variety will be excellent in soups!

### **Eggplant 'Listada de Gandia'**

I can taste the eggplant parmigiana or moussaka now! Scheepers states that this variety “has 5”-to 8”-long teardrop-shaped fruits with purple and lavender stripes on succulent, milky white skin” (p. 8). Given that I abhor oversized, seedy eggplant fruits, I am sure to find the size of this eggplant best suited for my uses.

### Onion ‘Borettana Cippolini’

Unique in a world of large, globular onions, this “rare Italian heirloom matures to 2” in diameter and just 1” thick with a rich bronze-rose color” (p. 26). Cippolini onions are great for sautéing, and I can picture these going well with beef roasts and even marinated pork tenderloins.

### Tomato ‘Canestrino’

Particularly suited to hearty, meaty sauces, the kind I prefer, the *canestrino* (‘little basket’) tomato “is a tasty Tuscan heirloom with a plump red body and slender, green-yellow shoulders” (p. 36).

### Melon ‘Petit Gris de Rennes’

It takes an exceptionally great melon to impress me. I am counting on this variety that Scheepers calls the “champagne of melons.” A French heirloom, this variety “produces small two- to three-pound dense melons with sweet, perfumed orange flesh” (p. 40). Time will tell if it rocks my world or reminds me of stagnant swamp water. I will give it the benefit of the doubt, in the meantime.



Greg Freeman

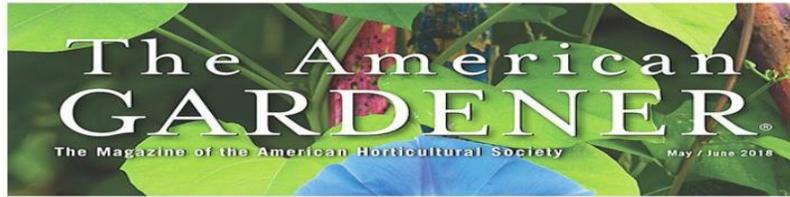
2018 John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds (Bantam, Connecticut, USA).

**Photograph: *The Odd Couple***



**Greg Freeman (b. 1974), *The Odd Couple* (2018), Digital photograph**

Introduced to the garden in 2017, *Narcissus* ‘Barr Hall’, a lovely poet daffodil from the breeding program of the late Sir Frank Harrison’s Ballydorn Bulb Farm in Northern Ireland, contrasts quite nicely with ‘Blanche Sandman’, a selection of the native honeysuckle vine, *Lonicera sempervirens*. The honeysuckle, by the way, is the subject of my “Plant in the Spotlight” piece in the May/June 2018 issue of *The American Gardener*, the magazine of the American Horticultural Society. Titled *The Odd Couple*, the daffodil and honeysuckle made a handsome, albeit unconventional, pair of companions for a photograph.



The May/June 2018 issue of *The American Gardener*, published by the [American Horticultural Society](#), contains one of my articles, a “Plant in the Spotlight” column on *Lonicera sempervirens* ‘Blanche Sandman’.

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In addition to being an avid gardener and daffodil hybridist, judge and exhibitor, Greg Freeman is an author, editor, singer, songwriter and amateur visual artist. 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. Recently 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* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2015), as well as multiple entries in the 2017 release, *Race in American Film: Voices and Visions That Shaped a Nation* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO/Greenwood, 2017), edited by Dr. Daniel Bernardi and Michael Green. 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. A 2018 gospel EP is scheduled for release.

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