

Bringing Out the Bright Colors

~by John Hunter, Nelson, NZ

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Bright Candle, 2Y-R . The flower on the left is not as vibrant as the flowers on the right.

I can remember some years ago the late Jim O'More visiting my daffodil garden and commenting on the rich colour of my stock of Matador compared to what he was growing. On sending some of my Matador bulbs to him, after two years of flowering, he told me they had reverted in colour exactly the same as his existing stock, which had both a paler perianth and crown.

The bright colour of my own stock. I am now sure, was due to quite a heavy top dressing of Sulphate of Potash. If your yellow perianth flowers have been pale in colour in past years, my advice would be, next season when they start to appear through the ground, give them a good dressing of Sulphate of Potash. This should work the oracle! If it does not, beware, your stock may have virus. If so, dig, burn and replace them.

Potash is one of the minerals that is essential to healthy plant growth. It improves all the colours, including the pinks, and gives daffodils stamina and resistance to disease, for there is no doubt to have healthy leaf growth ensures good bulb formation, hence better quality flowers follow. It should not be forgotten that wood ash is also an important source of Potash. If obtainable hedge and shrub trimmings can also be burned and a light dressing of the ash applied to the daffodils it will be very beneficial. On no account should ash from any treated timber be used.

My own daffodils receive Potash from three different dressings as they have wood ash when it is available and Sulphate of Potash applied as well as Nitrophoska Blue with trace elements. The Nitrophoska Blue is a German fertilizer which has a high Sulphate of Potash content, as well as containing Nitrogen and Phosphorus. This is a well balanced fertilizer and should be available in the States.