

## Onions and Daffodils Have Much in Common

~by Keith Kridler, Mt. Pleasant, Texas

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Photo Johan Botha: Life and the Onion. This image was taken on a copy stand mounted, Canon EOS 5D Mark 1, digital camera. The red onion was sliced very thinly and then placed on a light-box to provide the necessary back lighting. Lense: Canon EF 100mm Macro, F2.8. <https://wynmaker.wordpress.com/tag/onion/>

Soil structure is most important when it comes to holding nutrients. Nitrogen migrates through sandy soils or is flushed with water on down through the sand until it reaches a layer of impervious clay. Deeper plant roots take up nutrients on top of the clay layer and build leaves and stems with these building blocks and this is why mulch, especially from leaves of trees, are good to add to the top layer of your soil again. Leaves break down fairly quickly and these are “slow release” fertilizer pellets.

In our Master Gardener class I believe the PHD teacher said the reason to apply nitrogen to onions while they were rapidly growing was that each leaf above ground was connected to

one ring in the onion bulb. The more leaves the onions had above ground the more rings in the bulb and the bigger the onion.

We can look at the rings in daffodils by splitting the bulb vertically from the neck down to the center of the basal plate and make two bulbs out of one. It would be interesting to see if more leaves in the daffodils also create more rings in the bulbs. What about longer & wider leaves, do they make thicker rings?

In onions they recommend working a tailor made fertilizer into the beds for your particular soil test before or when planting, and it is the onion that should be referenced when getting a soil test from an Ag School because they have more experience with commercial onion growers than narcissus growers.

The class also covered how much nitrogen comes down in an average inch of rainfall but this was minuscule and an inch of rain washes the nitrogen that is already in the soil down further depending on soil structure. It also depended on how much lightning was in the thunderstorms as to the amount of available nitrogen that was tied to this electrical conversion.

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