

**All Gardens
Great & Small**
by
York Co.
Horticultural Agent
Tom Becker



**Double Flowers, Winter
Warms Spell...**

Gardeners I meet often ask lots of questions. Some of these questions are quite easy to answer while others take some researching and asking around. Here's two for this month's column.

Where do double flowers come from? Answer provided by Tim Elkner, Lancaster County Horticulture Agent. As gardeners, we tend to collect attractive or unusual plants for our yards. One type of plant that fits this description is a double-flowered form of a common plant like camellias, zinnias, chrysanthemums and others. Frequently, these double forms are more attractive and often they are sterile (which can be both good

and bad!). But what causes these double flowers in the first place?

An article in the February 15, 1997 issue of The American Nurseryman answered this question. The author stated that the double plants we so admire frequently have a genetic mutation that causes this condition. In the mutant plants there are generally no extra flower organs or missing flower organs. Instead, some of the flower organs have developed into the wrong organs. Let me discuss an example.

You may have noticed a double form of bloodroot in some garden catalogs. Bloodroot, sanguinaria canadensis, is a common name for a perennial native herb common in North America.

It blooms very early in woodlands producing a simple, white blossom on a fleshy root. It is sold for shaded wildflower gardens.

Upon comparing the double form of the flower to the simple bloodroot, the author of the article noted that both types contained the same number and arrangement of the eight outer petals on the flower. However, where the regular bloodroot contained about 36 stamens and carpels on the flower's inside, the double form had no carpels or stamens but instead had up to 48 petals, some of which were fused at the base. The double flowers are sterile since they are missing the reproductive organs.

However, not all double flowers are sterile. There are double forms of roses and columbine which do develop extra rows of petals without losing carpels and stamens. Note: The carpel contains the ovary, style and stigma. The stamen has the male reproductive organs of the flower.

Do warm winter days cause injury to plants? Answer provided by J. Robert Nuss, extension specialist, horticulture at PSU. Damage may have resulted from the high temperatures a few weeks ago. Reports indicat-

ed forsythia and lilac buds began to expand and show color. Flowering quince, privet, barberry and some viburnums may also have responded in like fashion. The extent of opening will govern the potential degree of damage that is possible on these plants. We will know by early spring if severe damage occurred.

There is really nothing that can be done to prevent potential injury to expanding (growing) plant tissue as a result of temperature fluctuations at this time of the year. Any buds that have shown a significant opening will be killed during the remainder of the winter and will not open during the normal spring glowering season. If tem-

peratures do drop rapidly after a mild day and remain reasonably stable, partially expanded buds may retain some dormancy and survive. Time will tell on these. Dormancy, the number of chilling days, and the temperature levels around the plants all govern how they will respond to recent conditions. Plants in protected, shaded locations may very well come through the current season with little or no damage as compared to similar plants in bright, warmer, sunny locations on the same property.

Any questions regarding the above article can be addressed to Tom Becker, Penn State Cooperative Extension at (717)840-7408.

**Daffodil Farm
Offers Tour**

GLOUCESTER, Va. - The Daffodil Mart, an internationally acclaimed trial garden and working hybridizing farm, will be open for guided public tours March 17 - April 15.

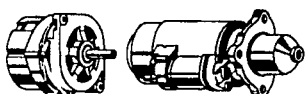
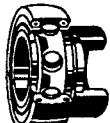
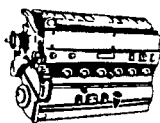
The tours will feature the largest variety of spring flowers found on the East Coast, and are available by reservation only four days a week, adding an extra day to accommodate the high public demand. The tours will be held on Tuesdays,

Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, at a cost of \$5 per person. Tour times for each specified day are 10 a.m., 12 noon, and 2 p.m. Reservations for this one-month limited engagement can be obtained by calling (804)693-3966, Monday through Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

The Daffodil Mart is a wholesale/retail mailorder flower bulb business and the farm, owned by Brent and Becky Heath, is located in Gloucester County, Virginia.

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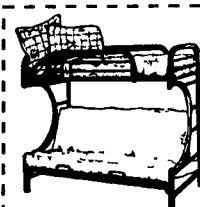
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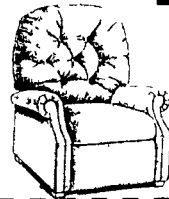
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