
THE FORTNIGHTLY CLUB

Of

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March 16, 2006

**"The Bauer Daffodil Garden -
Did It Just Happen?"**



Presentation: Written text and a video of the Garden

Dale Bauer and "Alma" Gene Bauer

Assembly Room, A. K. Smiley Public Library

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THE BAUER DAFFODIL GARDEN
---DID IT JUST HAPPEN?

By
Dale Bauer
(Alma) Gene Bauer

SUMMARY

This paper describes how the Bauer garden was developed in the San Bernardino mountains at a community named Smiley Park. The Bauers have lived there since 1961. Since then Gene Bauer's interest in spring blooming bulbs has developed into plantings of large drifts of daffodils over the undulating contours of the mountain. A pathway carries a visitor through a forested setting of five acres around their home. The paper briefly describes the native habitat of the genus *Narcissus*, its propagation and botanical classifications. Personal anecdotes of garden visitors are included.

A twenty minute video takes the viewer through the garden showing details and mass plantings of flowers.

BIOGRAPHIES

Dale Bauer

The youth of Dale Bauer was spent in rural Orange County when Garden Grove was primarily a citrus and agricultural center. Exposure to the world beyond included a Bachelor of Science in Physics from Occidental College, serving as a U.S. Naval minesweeping officer during WWII, graduating from the USC School of Architecture in 1952 and visiting major architectural centers in Europe.

1951 – 1961 created architectural and furniture designs with Architect Charles Eames in Venice, California

1954 married (Alma) Gene Bauer

1961 moved to Smiley Park in the San Bernardino Mountains for the four seasons environment

1963 – 1988 commuted to Redlands working with Architects Clare Day and/or Leon Armantrout completing such Redlands projects as: YWCA supergym expansion, First United Methodist Church, Sacred Heart Parish Center, Prospect Park Theater, and development of a Japanese panelized housing system in collaboration with ESRI

1988 – present: assisting spouse Gene Bauer in developing her garden around our residence

(Alma) Gene Bauer

Gene was born in Garden Grove, California, when it was still a rural, agricultural area. Her childhood and youth were spent on an orange grove, with summer vacations at Newport Beach. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree (1953) from the University of California at Los Angeles in art education with a specialty in painting, did graduate work at UCLA and completed a secondary teaching credential. She taught art in junior and senior high schools in the Los Angeles City School system.

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The location of the daffodil garden is tied physically and historically to the actions of Alfred and Albert Smiley. And its location on the south facing slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains is the result of access to the mountains created by lumbermen.

“In 1890, owners of a Michigan lumbering concern, the Highland Lumber Company, purchased a large tract of timber along the crest of the San Bernardino Mountains. They initiated the first of the large scale lumbering operations that included the construction of modern, efficient sawmills. The extensive need for packing crates for the citrus industry prompted an interest in the timber of the San Bernardino Mountains. The Highland Lumber Company not only operated a sawmill near the present site of Running Springs, but also a box factory in Highland.” (1) During the 1890’s, the company constructed the City Creek Toll Road between the mill and Highland in the valley. They charged tolls to teamsters hauling lumber from other mills. The death of the manager in 1895 caused a decline in company operations and by the time the company stockholders sold in 1898, the mill was at a standstill.

“When the holdings were purchased by the Brookings Lumber Company in 1898 it became the largest logging enterprise in the mountains. The old Highland mill at what is now called Fredalba was improved and a company town was built near the mill. It contained some twenty houses, a school and commissary to provide for the well being of mill hands and their families.” (2) The mill was being operated at peak capacity in 1901 and one hundred men were employed. By 1911 the mill operation ceased, having cut all the trees possible. By 1913, “they had removed the railroad and dismantled the mill. Brookings moved the entire plant to the Oregon coast just north of the California border. The company town at Fredalba became a summer home tract” (3) sold to Redlands buyers.

And now --- enter the Smiley Family.

At the same time that the Highland Lumber Company was busy delivering lumber to the valley, the Smiley name was being heard in Redlands. In the spring of 1889, Albert Smiley was in Southern California and came to Redlands to visit his nephew Fred, a son of Alfred, and “while there, Fred showed him 200 acres on the heights south of Redlands. Albert and Alfred soon purchased the site. Each of the brothers erected a residence on the crest of the hill. These served as winter homes since the brothers eventually divided their time between New York and California.” (4) Their elaborate development of roads, trails and landscape became known as Canyon Crest Park.

At some time in 1894, the Smileys must have used the rough-hewn City Creek Toll Road to explore the crest of the San Bernardino Mountains. Starting in 1895, they purchased the land contiguous to the Highland Lumber Company mill town. Soon this 260 acre

area felt the imprint of Alfred Smiley . He developed it into Fredalba Park (a combination of the two Smiley brothers first names), a destination resort in the concept of the Smiley brothers' resort of Lake Mohonk in New York State. Six miles of drives flowed through mature pine and oak trees; seven cottages were constructed and possessed unique views of the valley 4000 feet below. Alfred made his son Fred manager.

It proved to be a popular resort. Fred operated it from 1896 until 1912 when he moved his family to Hermon (Los Angeles) for schooling of his seven children at the Free Methodist Seminary. Fredalba Park was generally inactive during and after World War I. By 1923 the mountains were opening up for public use. Improved roads ran into them, more automobiles, construction of Lake Arrowhead and other real estate developments heralded a new era.

Considering external conditions and family needs, Fred Smiley sold Fredalba Park in 1923 to an investment company. Thus began a raucous selling of mountain lots to the public. Fredalba became a separate entity within yards of a tract newly christened with the self-serving name of Smiley Park Country Club. Over the years since 1923, Smiley Park (forgetting anything about it being a "country club") has been a sleepy, wonderful, tree-filled retreat of 100 homes.

My wife Gene and I bought into this hideaway in 1955, having found a site on the perimeter with level access, fine mature trees and open views to the south (the lumber company was prevented from cutting mature trees in Fredalba Park). The important thing being – the basic design of the park has remained unchanged from the time of Alfred

Smiley. Gene and I proceeded to design and build over a period of two summers, a modest 600 square foot cabin for weekend visits.

After permanently moving to Smiley Park from Los Angeles in 1961, I commuted to Redlands to pursue architectural design and soon found a strong philosophical connection between good architectural landscape design, the Smiley Brothers in Redlands and our home site in "our" Smiley Park

And now enter Gene Bauer --- she who has planted each bulb:

It was spring of 1957 and I was teaching art on the secondary level of the Los Angeles City School System. I spent Easter Vacation at our newly built cabin in Smiley Park. I saw perhaps a dozen daffodils blooming in the yard of a neighbor. That fall I purchased about 50 daffodil bulbs. All were chosen because of the attractive photograph accompanying each bin of bulbs. I was so ignorant of what I had just purchased, I pondered the brown, seemingly lifeless objects shaped like electric light bulbs and finally had to ask, "Which way is up?"

We were living in Los Angeles but I planted the bulbs at our weekend retreat in the mountains. The planting was accomplished in October. By early December the suspense was almost unbearable so I thrust a trowel into the moist soil beneath a bulb to see what was happening. Aha! Roots five inches long. The rather rough and forlorn-looking dry object had suddenly come to life. Dormancy had been broken.

Knowing that roots would continue to develop, I no longer peeked under the bulb, but weeks later I began to gently scratch the ground surface with a cultivator where I believed the sprout would actually appear. The sprout was a pale creamy color until it emerged and when it did, it turned green and developed into foliage.

The foliage enveloped several vertical scapes, each with a bud enclosed in a thin sheath. The bud was first vertical, then turned 90 degrees to the scape and the spathe split open. Three sepals enclosing three petals were bared and burst open. Voila! A perfectly formed six sectioned perianth surrounding a corona.

That first spring was so successful I continued planting bulbs each succeeding year.

From 50 the first year, then 500, then 1,000, then 10,000. The most I have planted was 35,000 in 1993. These have all been large new bulbs. I have never dug and divided any of the bulbs.

I probably have over 100 different named daffodils, some only one or two bulbs of each. The large drifts are composed of about 20 different kinds, sometimes repeated but only one kind of bulb to a drift. The bulbs in the large drifts are: Binkie, Bravoure, Camelot, Chromacolor, Decoy, Fortissimo, Fortune, Geranium, Hawera, Hillstar, Matador, Martinette, Peeping Tom, Pink Charm, Quail, Rustom Pasha, Tahiti, Tete-a-Tete, Thalia, Tunis, Unique, and World's Favorite.

Much time is spent in deciding where to plant the bulbs. This mountainous land was formed long before my arrival. I am fortunate in having interesting terrain to contemplate: ups and downs, undulations, rock out-croppings, ledges, superb valley views, magnificent mature trees and a southerly and westerly exposure.

It is important to me that the drifts of bulbs I plant conform to the contours of the terrain. Never are they planted in rows, nor are they just tossed out and planted where they fall. They are planted in planned drifts composed of one cultivar (all yellow, all white, all bi-colored, etc.), so that the drift of perhaps 3,000 bulbs will all bloom at the same time and be of the same height. "Hodge-podges" are never attractive. Sometimes a drift is planned to go around a single tree or through a cluster of trees. I would never cut or destroy a tree or shrub to accommodate a drift of flowers.

In addition to considering the terrain, color and sequence of bloom must also be anticipated. I am not trying to change the natural beauty of the area, only enhance it.

I have never artificially watered the bulbs in the ground. They have never been fertilized and have never been over-planted in the summer. Their simple requirements are cold, wet winters and dry, warm summers. A south and west exposure is to their liking and at least a half day of sunshine. An absolute must is well-drained soil. Rodents and animals are not attracted to them because all parts of the plant are toxic.

The first year a single bulb produces 1-3 flowers. The bulb divides itself, and the second year 4-6 flowers appear. It further divides and the third year it produces 6-7 flowers.

The most flowers I have observed from one bulb are 28 blooms. The bulb continues to divide and increase in flowers until it becomes overcrowded and the blooms decrease in number. Over the years the quantity of flowers increases and the quality decreases. I am interested only in color masses, not show flowers.

Some of the bulbs have been in the ground 40 years and still bloom. Others, not so healthy or vigorous to begin with, succumb in 3-4 years.

When I have decided where a drift will be planted, I use a shovel and turn over the soil to a depth of 8-10 inches, removing rocks, stones, branch remnants, pine cones, acorns and miscellaneous debris. I then rake it. I place the bulbs on the ground where I want to plant them. Drifts are composed of from 50 - 6,000 bulbs. If I am planning to plant 1,000 bulbs in a day, I place 200 on the ground so as not to overwhelm myself. I sit on the ground and, using a trowel, plant them. They are spaced about 6 inches apart. My left hand picks up the first bulb, my right hand holds the trowel that digs the hole, then the bulb is dropped in and covered with soil dug from the next hole. I always begin at the bottom of the slope (nothing is flat here) and work uphill, sitting on top of the already planted bulbs. I always plant left to right. I try to plant 600 before I stop for my mid-day nourishment. That leaves 400 to plant after lunch and it's always nice to know I have completed over half the task for the day.

The Mill Fire on September 13, 1997 swept over the entire area but did no damage to the bulbs because they were dormant at the time and safely tucked 6 inches under the ground. The only bulbs destroyed were those in the path of heavy equipment used to remove huge dead trees after the fire. That area has been re-planted. Two aspects of the fire were beneficial to the bulbs: the resulting ash acted as a soil nutrient, and the unfortunate loss of huge dead Ponderosa and Coulter pines allowed more sunshine into the area.

Spring 1998, six months after the fire, was certainly one to remember. It was both refreshing and thrilling to watch the charred hills come alive with the leaves varying in shades of green, yellow-green and blue-green. Surrounding blackened ruins, the flowers opened and the slopes were transformed into an exquisite tapestry of cool and warm values of the colors white, yellow and orange.

The name daffodil is the correct English name of all members of the genus *Narcissus*. The words daffodil and narcissus are interchangeable. It seems in the English-speaking world, daffodil is preferable. In the United States, the all encompassing organization devoted to this flower is called the American Daffodil Society. This is an international organization with members from countries all over the world. Their quarterly publication is called *The Daffodil Journal*. Perhaps even more encompassing is the Royal Horticultural Society of England. This group is the final authority on all things in the daffodil world. This group publishes *The International Daffodil Register and Classified List* including 1,170 pages of information describing over 30,000 named cultivars of

daffodils. The person compiling this formidable book is known as the International Daffodil Registrar. Their yearly publication is called *Daffodils*.

It is interesting to me that visitors from English speaking countries have no difficulty with the word daffodil. Visitors from non-English speaking countries always refer to the flowers in their native tongue – some variation of the Latin narcissus. Those S's seem to change to Z's very easily.

Daffodils are classed according to the characteristics of their appearance, including shape and size. There are now 13 divisions in the horticultural classification of daffodils:

- Division
1. Trumpet
 2. Large-cupped
 3. Small-cupped
 4. Double
 5. Triandrus
 6. Cyclamineus
 7. Jonquilla
 8. Tazetta
 9. Poeticus
 10. Bulbocodium
 11. Split-corona
 12. Other (those which do not fit any other division).
 13. Species and wild forms

Nearly all the bulbs I have planted are hybrids. The large quantities I purchase from catalogs are grown on huge acreage in the Netherlands. I purchase these in quantities of hundreds or thousands. There are too many variables to quote a price for these bulbs.

The very special, one-of-a-kind, latest introductions I purchase directly from hybridizers in the states of Oregon and Virginia and the countries of England and Northern Ireland. I have been fortunate to obtain bulbs from Australia and New Zealand via American hybridizers who have acclimated the bulbs to our hemisphere.

The catalogs issued by the hybridizers are always very interesting. Each bulb is listed by its name, the hybridizer's name, the year it was introduced, its parentage, a paragraph describing its appearance and, of course, its price. There are always several pages of colored photographs of some, but not all, of the bulbs offered for sale.

Hybridizers develop new daffodils from seed. They obtain the seed by a time-consuming process of brushing pollen from the anthers (the male part) of one flower onto the stigma (the female part) of another flower. This second flower is now known as the seed parent. The ovary of the seed parent enlarges and a seed pod develops. The ovary is trilocular, having three vertical chambers containing seed embryos. After fertilization, seed begins to mature and when ripe is either spherical and shiny black or wedge-shaped and matte black. A mature seed pod is called a capsule. The capsule may contain any number of mature seeds, from one to sixty or more.

The first year a seed is planted, a radical (root) grows downward into the soil and a sprout grows upward and becomes a single stem. The space between thickens and a bulb is now developing. It takes four to six years from a seed to develop a blooming size bulb. After its first flowering, if nothing new and exciting has been achieved, the bulb is discarded.

If a new color or even an interesting color nuance or shape has developed, the bulb is retained and grown for three or more years to ensure the new characteristic is stable. If it proves to be stable, it is then named and offered for sale. At least 10 years are involved in creating a new daffodil and hence the high introductory price. The stock of this new bulb may only be increased by a piece of that bulb. Its seeds will not reproduce themselves but will revert to some previous relative in its lineage.

Bulbs offered in the catalogs of hybridizers are very expensive and are always priced per bulb. Prices may range from two dollars a bulb to two hundred dollars for one bulb.

Species

In the beginning when it was being decided where daffodils would be distributed on Earth, the Western Hemisphere was totally overlooked. No daffodils were placed on either North or South American soil or south of the Equator. Today, any daffodil found on these two continents was planted at sometime by some human being.

People who grew up in the eastern or southern part of the United States tell me they remember wild daffodils from their childhood. Because this cannot be possible, the word "naturalized" might be more accurate. Someone, perhaps even the Pilgrims, brought the bulbs from Europe and over time the bulbs have been able to sustain themselves on vacant and abandoned land in various parts of this country.

Narcissus species are indigenous or native to the two continents of Europe and Africa. More precisely, to the Mediterranean region. There are over 60 Narcissus species recognized that are still found in the wild. Spain has the largest concentration of different species, with Portugal and Morocco not far behind. Algeria, Libya and Tunisia are also well endowed with species. Narcissus species may be found in all the countries bordering the Mediterranean including all the islands in the Sea. More inland, species occur from the Pyrenees in France through Switzerland, Austria and the Balkans to Greece. Some extend into Germany, the Netherlands and England. Some are found at sea level but most are found in high mountains on open ground and woodlands, alpine turf, river silt and rock crevices.

Knowing the origin of Narcissus species and realizing that hybrids are generations removed from the species, it is not too difficult to understand why my bulbs seem content where they are planted. Conditions in my area are not too remote from the home of their ancestors.

After a long, hot Summer, a Fall filled with all-day digging and planting, a Winter of anticipation, what a joy for Spring to finally arrive. Each spring seems more exciting than the previous one. From the entrance, a pathway directs a garden visitor through a five acre forested setting, drifts of daffodils, and past featured overlooks and sitting areas.

What began in ignorance expanded into a 49 year educational odyssey. Forty-nine years ago it was all mine. Today it seems to belong to the world.

Over the years I have had many memorable encounters with visitors. Here are a few of them:

1. A group of 15 people representing 3 generations of one family were enjoying themselves among the flowers. They were all conversing in an Asian language of which I understood not a word. They were arranging themselves between 2 large pine trees so a photograph of them could be taken. A male from the middle generation was in charge of taking the photograph. He carefully set up his tripod, adjusted his camera, checked the light source, made sure everyone was grouped to his liking and made certain there were no interlopers included. All of this amongst a grand flurry of words between all 15 people. He flailed his arms in wild gesticulation for everyone to quiet down because the big moment had arrived. Suddenly, in unison, all 15 voices gleefully shouted these 4 English words: "one, two, three, CHEESE."

2. A young man, about 35 years old, with dark brown eyes and a naturally tan complexion approached me in the garden. He was quite excited. He began the conversation, "So, these are daffodils!" I said, "Yes." He continued, "Oh, I've waited so long to finally see them." I was puzzled over this statement. He then told me he had been born and grew up in Bombay, India. His English teacher, of course, was from England. It was a requirement for him to memorize William Wordsworth's poem that immortalized this flower, *Daffodils*. He had never even seen a daffodil and could not imagine what one really looked like, let alone 10,000 that Wordsworth had seen "at a glance." I was pleased that it was I who gave some color and life to the word "daffodil" for this young man.

3. Sometimes people make a demonstrative statement followed quickly by a question. "Oh, look at all the wildflowers!" Then, after a puzzled look, "They are wildflowers, aren't they?"

4. Nearly every day someone asks me, "Do you work here?" My simple answer is always. "Yes." And that is the end of the conversation.

5. One day I was standing and watching people when I felt a gentle nudge on my arm. Someone with camera in hand said, "You're in the way of my picture. Would you move?" I quietly complied but I really wanted to say, "But of course, I only work here."

6. I have been asked very bluntly, "What is this place?"

I have daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, muscari and fritillarias that bloom for about 6 weeks in the spring. I allow the general public to enter for three of those weeks. The dates are

clearly posted. Unless invited, I do not care to have people wandering around either before or after the posted dates. The closing date is usually about the second week of April.

7. This happened in August, 4 months after closing the garden and securing two gates. I had been working in an area preparing it for planting the following month. Serenity is something I value above all else. The day had been calm and tranquil when like a bolt from the blue, a young woman in her 30's was rapidly approaching me. I greeted her with a bland, "Hello." She replied, "Hello." Thinking she was lost, I inquired "Wherever did you come from and where are you going? Are you lost?" She said she wasn't lost and she had left her automobile at the church and she had walked to the garden. She did not explain how she managed to walk around the closed gates. I noticed she was carrying a small box. I thought she had brought me a gift, a gift of yummys no doubt. She informed me she had arrived at her destination and the treasured box she was carrying contained the remains of her recently departed and very dear dog. She intended to scatter the ashes over the daffodils. Two words can describe my reaction: speechless and stunned!

8. Back to springtime. One of the most astounding comments and the one chosen as the title for this paper occurred about 30 years ago. I came home from picking up the mail one day and there was a motorcycle parked in the front of our house. A couple, perhaps in their late 40's, soon appeared and the woman asked me, "Do you live here?" I answered, "Yes." She then asked, "Are all these flowers yours?" I replied,

“Yes.” She seemed overwhelmed and at a loss for words as she groped to exclaim,

“They’re so beautiful. Did they, did they... just happen?”

CONCLUSION

So- as reviewed here, the Daffodil Garden DID NOT JUST HAPPEN. It has evolved from the following confluence:

- Abundant pine forests attracted LUMBERMEN to the mountains.
- Lumbermen carved CITY CREEK TOLL ROAD from the mountains for transport of wood to the valley.
- THE SMILEY'S found the area for their "Fredalba Park" in the forest on the crest of the mountains.
- The BAUERS found their site and shared the vision of Alfred Smiley in Smiley Park.
- GENE BAUER became enthralled with the form and colors of spring blooming bulbs.
- GENE BAUER has continually found the energy to plant each bulb in order to "paint the hillside" using the daffodil color palette.

THE FUTURE OF THE GARDEN DEPENDS ON THAT ENERGY

VIDEO INTRODUCTION

PART ONE

In 2004, garden visitor Nancy Jones presented us with a two minute video of bloom forms and textures she had seen in the garden. We were impressed by her photographic sensibilities. We have collaborated with her to create a video whose purpose is to show the garden as it was in 2005 – for use by us in the future when we may not be able to make the garden walk on our own. We invited her to create a video of a literal "walk through the garden." We produced the video using live action and micro photographs by Nancy Jones and photographs from our own collection.

She edited the various components in conference with us and integrated music with the visuals. (14 minutes).

PART TWO

General views of color massing of the flower drifts in the garden. (3 minutes).

PART THREE

Nancy Jones' intimate look at the reproductive elements of a blossom, which are unashamedly displayed for our enjoyment. It is infrequent we can observe the subtle textures and petal forms of blossoms. This is one more example of the beauty and complexity to be found in the art of our creator. (5 minutes).

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