

Daffodil Days

Spring into Rideau

The Story of Daffodils in the Rideau Lakes

It all began in the fall of 1999 when one family planted daffodils along Freeland Road in Portland to celebrate the coming of the new millennium. Each year since, they have added new varieties, creating a vibrant springtime display that has inspired an entire community.

In 2010, the Joint Beautification Sub-Committee of the Township of Rideau Lakes launched The Daffodil Project with an ambitious vision: to make Rideau Lakes the Daffodil Capital of Ontario by 2015. Hundreds of residents embraced the project, planting daffodils along the township's roadsides, fences, public spaces, and private gardens. Their collective efforts flourished. In May 2015, the Township of Rideau Lakes was officially proclaimed Ontario's Daffodil Capital.

Today, the tradition continues to grow. Now called simply Daffodil Days, residents and businesses plant thousands more bulbs each fall, working together to brighten the landscape. The Township proudly supports Daffodil Days by contributing 250 bulbs each year, which are planted by Community Enhancement Committees in the villages and hamlets of Rideau Lakes. Citizens and local businesses also add to this living legacy, planting more bulbs yearly, joining the shared goal of populating spring with these hardy, vibrant, and symbolically bright daffodils.

One of the highlights of Daffodil Days is the self-guided Daffodil Days Tour, offering visitors a chance to experience the breathtaking beauty of over 10,000 golden blooms across Rideau Lakes. The tour highlights six signature viewing properties, showcasing thousands of daffodils in full bloom. These must-see locations are in Portland, Newboro, Chantry, California, Jones Falls, and Chaffeys Lock.

Beyond these featured stops, daffodils can be spotted brightening gardens throughout the Township — adorning private homes, public parks, municipal buildings, and planters in villages and hamlets. Together, these vibrant displays celebrate the spirit of spring and the community's shared commitment to making Rideau Lakes Ontario's Daffodil Capital.

About Daffodils

Daffodils, or Narcissus, are a beloved symbol of spring, renewal, and hope. While most people are familiar with the classic bright yellow trumpet varieties, hundreds of different daffodils offer unique colours, shapes, and bloom times. This past fall, the Township has supported the planting of three beautiful varieties:

- Dutch Master – A classic large yellow trumpet daffodil known for its reliability and vibrant colour.
- Ice Follies – Featuring large white petals with a pale yellow cup that softens to creamy white as it matures.
- Tête-à-Tête – A charming miniature daffodil with golden yellow blooms, perfect for borders and naturalized plantings.

The daffodil (*Narcissus*) is a hardy, perennial flowering plant in the Amaryllis family, known for its bright, trumpet-shaped flowers that typically bloom in early spring. Native to Europe and North Africa, daffodils grow from bulbs and thrive in temperate climates with well-drained soil and full or partial sun. Most commonly yellow, they also come in white, orange, and bi-coloured varieties. Daffodils are resistant to pests due to natural toxins in their tissues and provide a critical early nectar source for pollinators. Their name, *Narcissus*, comes from Greek mythology, and they are widely regarded as symbols of renewal and hope.

Daffodils (*Narcissus*) were first introduced to Canada by European settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries. Brought over from Europe as ornamental garden plants, they quickly became popular for their bright, early spring blooms and their ability to thrive in Canada's temperate climates. Over time, daffodils were widely planted in both private gardens and public spaces across the country. Today, they are celebrated not only for their cheerful appearance but also as symbols of renewal, hope, and resilience — qualities that resonate deeply in Canadian communities, particularly during spring festivals like Rideau Lakes' Daffodil Days.



The Symbolism of the Daffodil

The daffodil is a timeless symbol of renewal, hope, and new beginnings. As one of the first flowers to bloom in early spring, it represents the end of winter and the promise of warmer, brighter days. Across cultures, daffodils are often associated with resilience and rebirth, making them a powerful emblem of optimism and perseverance. In many traditions, they are also seen as a sign of good fortune — legend has it that if you spot the first daffodil of the season, your year will be filled with prosperity and happiness. For Rideau Lakes, the daffodil has become a beautiful symbol of community pride, growth, and the shared vision of a vibrant future.

The Daffodil and the Legend of Narcissus

The daffodil, scientifically known as *Narcissus*, draws its name from the ancient Greek myth of a young man named Narcissus. According to legend, Narcissus was so captivated by his reflection in a pool of water that he became entranced, unable to turn away. Eventually, he faded away, and a beautiful flower bloomed in his place — the first daffodil. This timeless story links the daffodils to themes of reflection and self-awareness. Yet, while the myth carries a cautionary message about vanity, the daffodil has come to symbolize renewal, hope, and the joy of spring's arrival. As one of the first flowers to awaken after winter, the daffodil reminds us to look inward, lift our gaze, and appreciate the beauty and new beginnings around us.



Photographing Daffodils: Moments of Peace and Joy

Spending time among daffodils offers more than just a beautiful view — it's an opportunity to reconnect with nature, slow down, and experience peace and well-being. These bright, cheerful flowers are often seen as symbols of hope and renewal, and taking the time to photograph them allows you to fully appreciate their delicate beauty. Whether capturing a broad sweep of golden blooms or focusing on the intricate details of a single flower, photographing daffodils can be a calming, almost meditative experience.

Tips for the Best Daffodil Photos:

- Get low: Daffodils often hang their heads slightly, so crouch down to capture their delicate faces looking up.
- Look for soft light: Early morning or late afternoon light brings out the rich yellow tones without harsh shadows.
- Find a contrast: Position your shot so the vibrant yellow blooms pop against the deep greens of the leaves, the blue sky, or even a rustic fence.
- Explore angles: Try photographing from underneath the flower for a unique perspective, or capture a row of blooms leading the eye into the landscape.
- your time: Slow down and enjoy the quiet moments — being present in nature is as rewarding as the photos.

Remember, each photo becomes part of your Spring into Rideau adventure, so snap away and share the joy at [#springintorideau](#) [#daffodildays](#) [#experiencerideaulakes](#)



A Most Famous Daffodil Poem

Few poems capture nature's simple joy and restorative power as beautifully as William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." Written in 1804 and inspired by a walk Wordsworth took with his sister Dorothy near Ullswater in England's Lake District, the poem describes when he came upon a long ribbon of golden daffodils dancing in the breeze. The sight of thousands of these cheerful flowers lifted his spirits and later, in moments of solitude, returned to him as a source of peace and joy.

Wordsworth's Daffodils reflects his deep belief in nature's ability to nourish the human soul. His words remind us that even a simple moment spent among flowers can leave a lasting impression, offering comfort and inspiration long after the moment has passed. The poem has endured as one of the most beloved works in English literature, celebrating the daffodil not just as a flower but as a symbol of beauty, serenity, and the gentle power of nature to heal.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

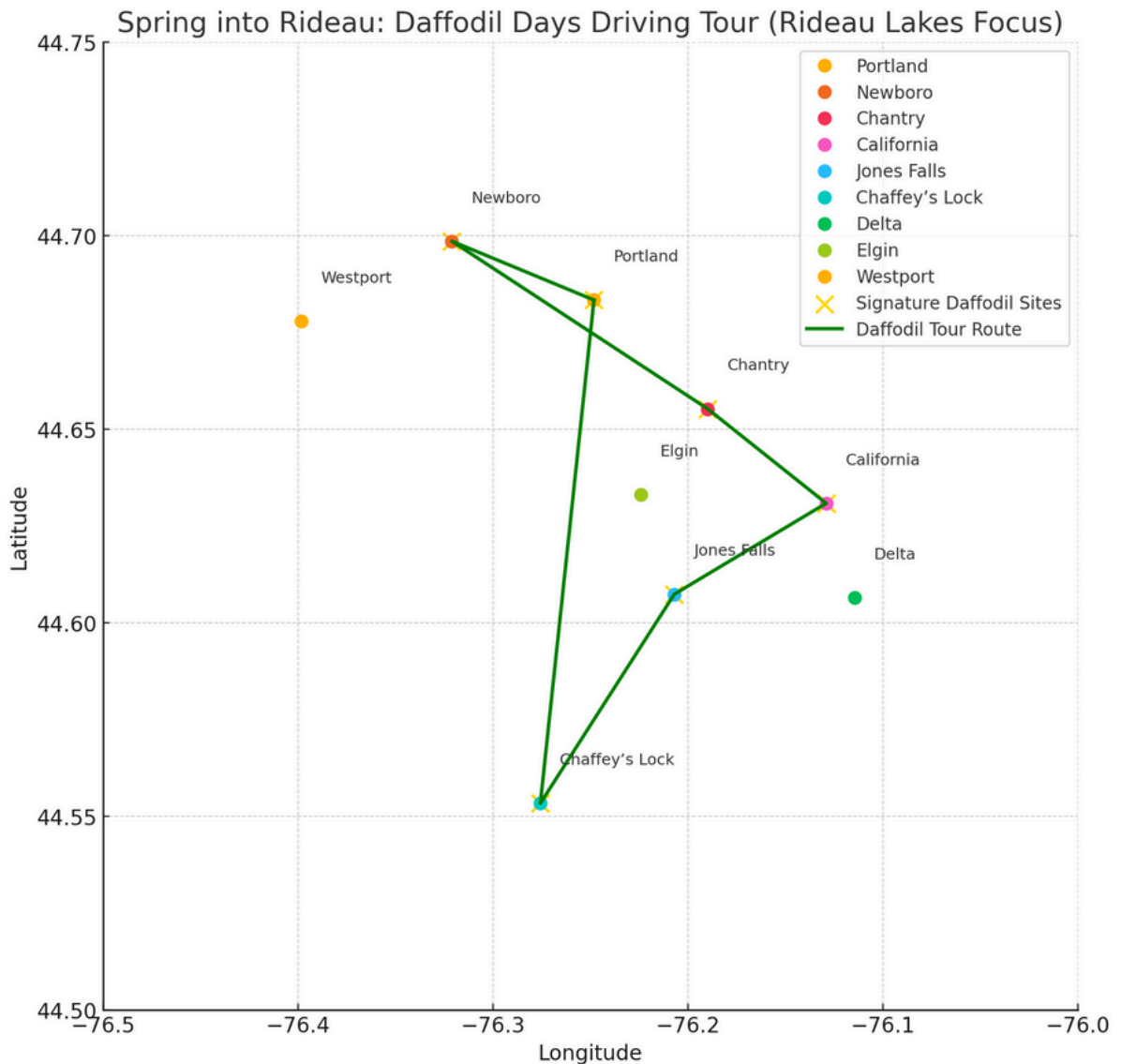
The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.



Daffodil Days Driving Tour

Signature Tour Stops



Distances Between Signature Sites

- Portland → Newboro: 11 km
- Newboro → Chantry: 11.5 km
- Chantry → California: 5.5 km
- California → Jones Falls: 6.7 km
- Jones Falls → Chaffeys Lock: 8.1 km
- Chaffeys Lock → Portland: 14.6 km

Daffodil Days Driving Tour

Pro-tips for your Adventure

- ✓ Start early to make the most of the day and see all six signature locations.
- ✓ Bring your camera or phone—there are dozens of Instagram-worthy moments!
- ✓ Wear comfortable shoes for walking trails and gardens.
- ✓ Pack a water bottle, picnic blanket, and sunscreen.
- ✓ Plan your meals—some areas are remote, so pack snacks if needed.

Extend Your Trip!

- Make it a weekend getaway with an overnight stay
- Explore nearby trails and parks, or book a springtime paddle

Ready to Explore?

Enjoy the Daffodil Days Tour in Rideau Lakes—Ontario's Daffodil Capital!
For more info on Spring into Rideau events and workshops, visit
www.rideaulakes.ca

