

# Daffodils in Running Springs



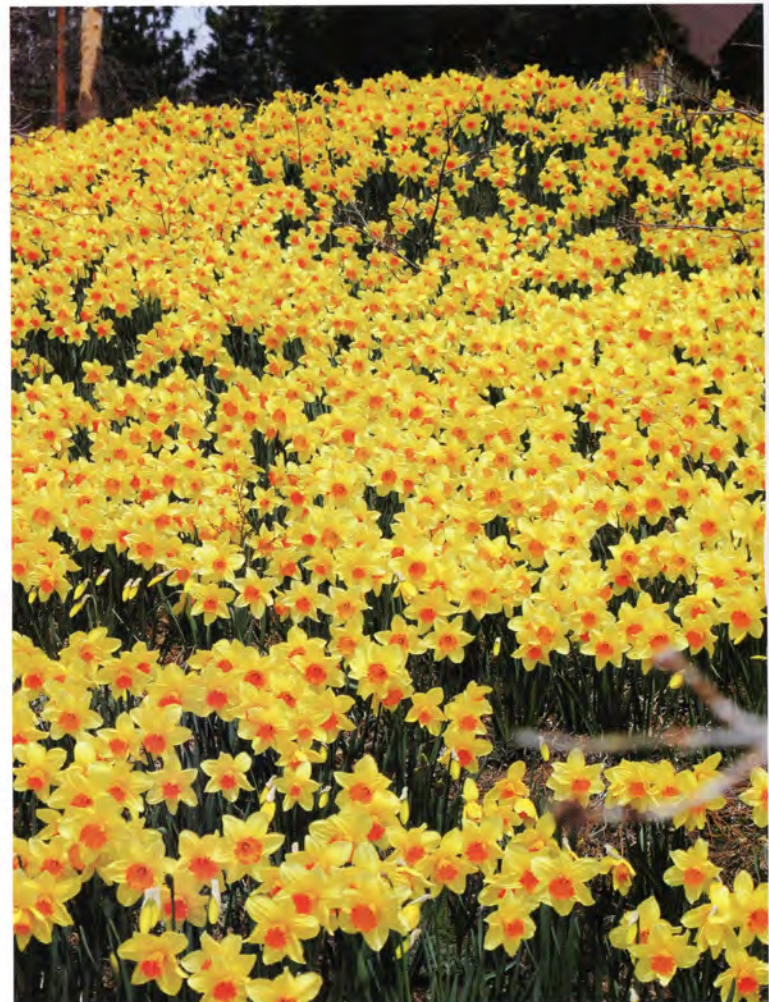
More than five acres of mountain landscape are host to one million daffodils, accented by assorted other bulbs such as fritillarias, hyacinths, muscari, and tulips. Some of the flowers are in drifts that spill down the steep slopes; others stand in large beds. All were planted, one at a time, by one woman — Gene Bauer. She started 49 years ago, inspired by a few daffodils in a neighbor's garden. Bauer planted 48 daffodils in the fall of 1958. Needless to say, they thrived. Since then she's planted daffodils every year, including an unbelievable 35,000 in 1993. Every slope cleared, every trail carved out of the hillside, every bulb planted — all the hard work — has been done by Gene and her husband, Dale, but mostly by Gene. As she puts it, "The work is done by two hands, two feet and a body minus a brain."

Why daffodils? "Not only are they beautiful and sturdy, but also the bulbs are toxic. Gophers, squirrels and all the other critters that feast on tulips and other bulbs leave daffodils alone," says Bauer. Running Springs sits at a 5,500-foot elevation, well above most of the smog in the Los Angeles basin. Ecologically, it's a transition zone between chaparral and yellow pine forest. More

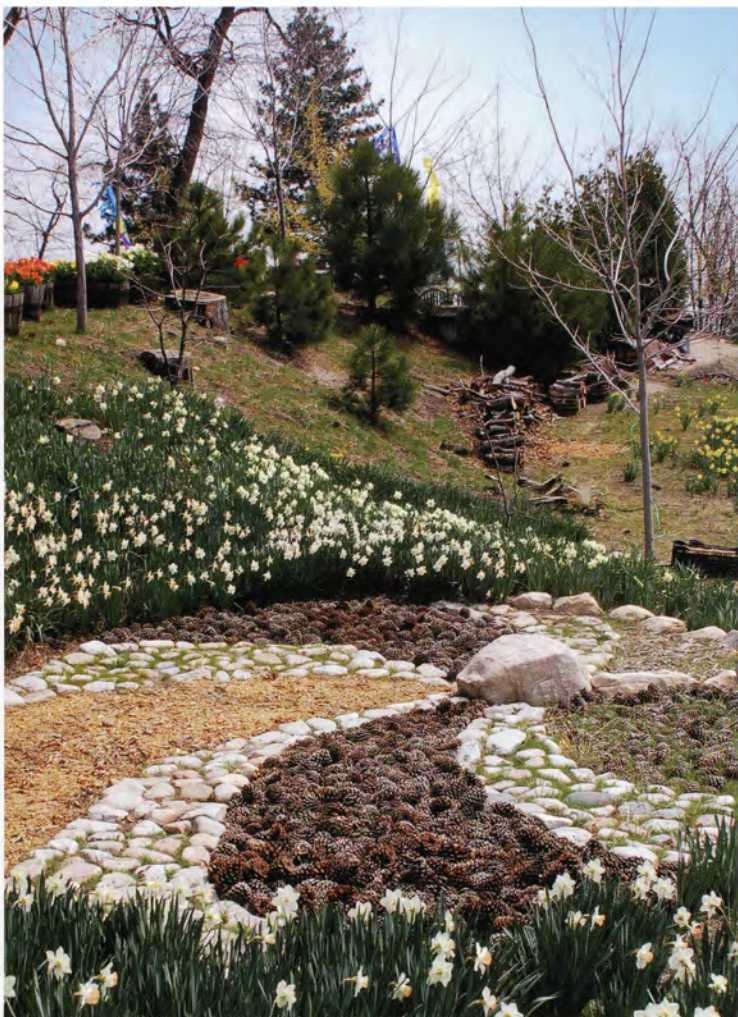


importantly, it has a distinct cold season, which suits the daffodils just fine. Over the hilly five acres grow native black oak, incense cedar, Coulter, knobcone, sugar and ponderosa pines, and white fir. Anyone can visit during peak bloom time, early March to early April.

Directions from Lake Arrowhead: Take Hwy. 18 to Running Springs, then Hwy. 330 towards San Bernardino. Turn left on Fredalba Rd. (at the end of the passing lane). Proceed 1.2 miles. Park at St. Anne's Church (30480 Fredalba Rd.)







*Photos by Victoria LaVers*



# History of Running Springs

It was the lure of harvesting virgin timber in the San Bernardino Mountains in general, and the need for a new road in particular, that was the beginning of the area now called Running Springs. In May of 1890, Thomas McFarlane was hired to build a new road up City Creek. By the spring of 1892, the Highland Lumber Company opened to the public their new route to the crest as a toll road. The charge was 25 cents per animal or 50 cents for a wagon and team. The City Creek Toll Road became a popular route to the mountains, even with the danger of meeting a fully-loaded timber wagon heading down the steep grade.

In April 1895, Alfred (Fred) and Albert Smiley, two wealthy brothers from Redlands,

purchased 262 acres of forest land from the Highland Lumber Company. They laid out a town complete with hotel and rental cottages. The resort was called Fredalba Park—a combination of the names Fred and Albert. By May of 1896, nine cottages were completed and available for rent for a whopping \$75 per year! A restaurant and more cottages popped up like mushrooms, and Fredalba blossomed. Because of the mill worker and lumberjack families there were eventually enough children in the area to warrant opening a school in 1902. By 1908, Fredalba was a regular town with stage and mail service, full-furnished housekeeping cabins, ready-prepared meals, reasonable provisions and complete camping equipment. When the Brookings lumber operation closed in 1913, the mill

workers left and the decline of Fredalba began.

With improved highways came change to the middle crest country of the San Bernardino Mountains. Rampant development that had already hit Crestline, Lake Arrowhead and the Big Bear areas, finally reached Running Springs in 1923. The area around the junction of Rim of the World Drive and City Creek Road, known as Hunsaker Flats, was sold to a syndicate led by realtor B.L. Smith in 1924. Smith planned out a small business district, housing tracts, and a resort and called the area Running Springs Park. Lots were bought up quickly and by 1927, Running Springs was a fast-growing community with a general store, cafe, gas station, post office, and approximately 400 residents.





## Subdivisions Surround Running Springs

Two miles east of Running Springs near the junction of Deep Creek's north and south forks, E.R. Capstaff and his Los Angeles-based backers incorporated Arrowbear Company and invested \$200,000 to survey home lots and build a community hall, garage, and 50 cabins. Helmar "Swede" Nyquist was hired to build a concrete dam, forming 5-acre Arrowbear Lake.

Just west of Fredalba, the firm of Taylor and McMillian developed Luring Pines tract and Luring Pines Lodge, which featured a popular dance hall. The Clinton Miller tract, southwest of Running Springs, featured large lots and streets named for Indian tribes. The Smiley Park subdivision, next to Fredalba, swallowed up the old resort and remaining lumber community. A.H. Powers named his 80-acre tract, located just west of Arrow Bear, Dear Lick Springs and built a rustic lodge.

On the mountain front, south of Running Springs, expensive acre lots were sold with sweeping valley views. British movie star, Reginald Denny, built his \$65,000 home overlooking Plunge Creek in 1927. Denny wanted to put in an airstrip so he could fly up to the mountain, but was denied. Another movie star, Hoot Gibson, built a large home and stable just west of Denny's home. The largest of the estates was the two-story mansion of Hollywood producer, David O. Selznick. The guests at Selznick parties in the early 1930s read like a "Who's Who" of the Hollywood entertainment industry. Walter Huston's estate, built in the early 1930's, was later converted into a private school.

With the completion of the final section of City Creek Road (today's Highway 330) to its junction with Rim of the World Drive at Running Springs in 1924, development of the mountain community began to snowball. The improved



road put the goal of reaching the mountain crest within range of the average driver. According to the Forest Service, over the Fourth of July weekend of 1925, over 11,360 cars made their way up City Creek Road.

