



Complement Garden Plants with Bulbs

Achieve season-long beauty in your landscape by including bulbs as companions for existing plants. Bulbs that bloom in early spring bring an end to a gray winter. Later in spring, bulbs are pleasing neighbors to perennials and spring-blooming trees and shrubs. When planted amongst summer-blooming annuals and perennials, they add another layer of interest in the garden.

Before planting, remember these bulb basics:

- 1) Bulbs need to be dry when they are dormant. Plant them in high and dry spots and avoid areas that collect water.
- 2) Bulbs need lots of sun, although very early-blooming varieties tolerate shade cast by deciduous trees.
- 3) Bulbs benefit from fertilizer. Use a fertilizer formulated specifically for bulbs or bone meal when planting.

Some bulbs burst into bloom very early in spring. Snowdrops, scilla, winter aconite and crocuses bloom before anything else stirs in the garden and quickly form colonies of color. Plant them in an existing bed of groundcover. The groundcover may not bloom until May, but the bed can still boastfully bloom beginning in February.

Mid season bulbs fill the gap between the last patches of melting snow and the beginning of flowers on trees and shrubs. Plant these bulbs amongst low-growing perennials. The perennials will form a carpet of color at the bases of bulbs. Imagine red tulips rising above the flowers of white candytuft. Or the pretty picture created with the white daffodil 'Thalia' and pink tulip 'Angelique' blooming over forget-me-nots.



Large bouquets of daffodils can be planted between daylilies and ornamental grasses. Although these perennial companions will be dormant when the daffodils are blooming, their emerging foliage will later help hide the declining foliage of the bulbs.

Crabapples can be dressed with bulbs planted with perennials at their bases. Low-growing junipers can have late-season tulips planting behind them. Their flowers will peak out from behind adding color to the scene.

Early summer shows off the most familiar flowering perennials, but make your borders even more beautiful with alliums. Their ball-shaped flower clusters can be blue, purple, or white flowers and in sizes from 1 to 10 inches across.



Try the blue *Allium caeruleum* with yellow-flowering yarrow. Or plant the mauve *Allium christophii* in a bed of pink-flowering perennial geraniums.

Take your landscape from ordinary to extraordinary with the thoughtful pairings of bulbs with groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and trees.



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