

Bell County Master Gardeners

Tip of the Week

By Joyce Friels

It's Still Time To Plant Bulbs for a Spring Show!

Spring flowers bring color and excitement to a landscape after a bland, boring winter. Spring bulbs love to surprise you with their bright blooms when placed under deciduous trees where they can soak up the warming spring soil and sun. When planted in front of dark green shrubbery or a fence, they really stand out! If you have a flower bed by the front door or in the center of the yard, you can probably find room to plant a few bulbs. They don't require a large area and they will make quite a splash. Spring bloomers also look great planted in containers sitting on a sunny patio or front step.

Some spring blooming bulbs that do well in Central Texas are Allium (flowering onion), Anemone, Crocus, Starch Hyacinth (*Muscari racemosum*), Dutch Iris, Louisiana Iris, Bearded Iris, Easter Lily, Leucojum (Snowflake), Narcissus, Rannunculus, Spring Starflower, Sisyrinchium (Blue-eyed Grass), Lady Tulip (*Tulipa clusiana*), and Zantedeschia (Calla Lily). Tulips and hyacinths enjoy the cold temperatures of the northern states. Therefore, tulips and hyacinths found in most nurseries should be considered annuals in our area because our winters do not get cold enough to keep them happy. Squirrels love to eat tulip bulbs, but they don't like daffodils!

You still have time to plant bulbs that will bloom next spring if you get them in the ground in December. So preparation and planning is the key to having a spring show of colorful blooms. Plan also to plant flowers over them that will bloom and grow later in the season. Plant bulbs in well-drained beds because a soggy bed will rot the bulbs. Bulbs don't need soil that retains moisture because they don't root deeply. Cover the plantings with a good layer of mulch to keep them from a hard freeze. To give a spectacular show, plant fairly close together in groups. Try waves of the same color or a wild mixture to draw the eye!