

Bulbs as Companion Plants

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Allium –

- Deer, rabbit, and squirrel resistant
- Diverse; some architectural, others small and best to mass
- Foliage begins to yellow right at bloom time - be sure to tuck into grasses, mid-sized perennials or ground covers to hide the fading foliage.

Anemone blanda –

- Soak tubers overnight to soften prior to planting
- Lovely fern-like foliage fades quickly

Camassia –

- Native to North America
- Tolerant and dependable
- Will grow in sun, shade, clay soils, wet, dry.
- Excellent with ornamental grasses or natural plantings

Chionodoxa –

- Deer and squirrel resistant
- Longer stemmed than Scilla; larger and looser flower spray
- Flowers blue with white center—outward facing
- Ideal for underplanting and interplanting

Colchicum –

- Very heavy in foliage – allow room
- Foliage dies a very ugly death—keep in mind when deciding on a planting site
- Spectacular flowers at a time when really appreciate it
- Be sure to mark or note location – prone to be dug into

Crocus tommasinianus -

- Squirrel resistant
- Early food source for pollinators
- Excellent for underplanting and also for lawns

Eranthis –

- Wonderful harbinger of spring
- Soak overnight to soften prior to planting
- Allow to set and release seeds to naturalize

Fritillaria –

- Diverse group of bulbs; some tolerate moisture, others not at all
- *Fritillaria imperialis* need to be planted on a tilt, so water doesn't collect in the hole from the previous season's stem
- *Fritillaria meleagris* appreciates a moist location.

Galanthus –

- Wonderful for shady nooks – Brightens up dark areas
- Will naturalize nicely
- *Galanthus nivalis* 'Flore Pleno', a double snowdrop is very slow to colonize; plant a lot to make a statement; needs to be seen up close to appreciate the delicate double flowers

Iris reticulata–

- Leaves are square and continue to grow after flowers fade– up to 2'
- *Iris histrioides* are larger than *Iris reticulata*

Hyacinthoides–

- Bell-shaped flowers on 8" – 12" stems
- Very vigorous heirloom bulb
- Naturalizes readily

Leucojum –

- *Amaryllis* family – so deer and squirrel resistant
- Daffodil-like foliage
- Beautiful, draping, white bell-shaped flowers
- Long lasting – flowers open for long length of time
- Tolerates moist soils

Lycoris –

- Known as resurrection lily, surprise lily, or magic lily
- Foliage emerges in spring, goes dormant in summer
- Fragrant flowers appear in late summer on leafless stems

Muscari –

- Excellent naturalizers – ideal for underplanting shrubs and also for adding to lawns . Allow seeds to set and disperse to colonize more rapidly
- Deer and squirrel resistant
- Foliage reappears in fall; do not cover with soil
- Fall foliage good indicator of bulb planting locations – use as a marker to identify bulb areas
- *Muscari latifolium* – one large leaf; similar to lily of the valley; tends to look tidier than *Muscari armeniacum*.

Narcissus –

- Ultimate hardiness and dependability
- Deer and rabbit resistant; leaves contain tiny, razor sharp crystals of calcium oxylate, so grazing animals will ignore-
- Great to combine with perennials, mass under trees & shrubs
- Some for distance impact, others close-up
- In general, Narcissus prefer a slightly moist soil rather than drought in the summer months; the exceptions are Jonquils (Div. 7) & Tazettas (Div. 8), which prefer hot, baking sun in the summer.
- Daffodils should be planted as early as possible in the fall.

Nectaroscordum -

- Unusual, pendulous green and plum flowers on tall stems
- Pest resistant
- Attracts pollinators

Puschkinia –

- Tightly composed flowers on short stems
- Beautiful Wedgewood blue & white
- Naturalize more slowly than Scilla or Chionodoxa
- Pest resistant

Scilla –

- Scilla siberica - blanket of blue in lawns
- Perennializes under the soil, naturalizes above by seed
- Tolerate heavy soils
- Scilla bifolia – smaller and early – interesting flower buds
- Scilla mitschtshenkoana - Milk Squill – best for larger areas; tend to take over small plantings - aggressive, not invasive-can be a bit obnoxious in a small areas.

Tulips –

- Spectacular color – but prone to decline
- Deer and squirrel magnets
- Will not tolerate wet soils; prefer hot, baking summers
- Treat as annuals, with some exceptions:
 - * darwins
 - * species
 - * fosteriana
 - * greigii
 - * kaufmanniana
 - * single late
- In high impact areas, replant new tulips each fall-- lift existing tulips after they bloom and replant in beds for cutflowers; if they rebloom great, if not, remove.

A few tips:

- Bulbs prefer hot, dry summers – think of where they are from
- Planting beneath deciduous trees & shrubs advantageous in that the tree pulls moisture from the soil in summer.
- Irrigation a bane—
- Plant deeply – at least 3 times the diameter of the bulb; even better if a bit deeper – or add layer of mulch – this will discourage damaging the bulbs when weeding or adding perennials
- Water in well in the fall after planting to encourage root growth
- Allow foliage to yellow and shrink before removing – and cut off; do not tug at it – this can disrupt the roots.

For combining with perennials:

- Daylilies and daffodils – always a great combo
- *Allium* 'Globemaster' with *Hosta* or *Nepeta*
- *Allium caeruleum* or *sphaerocephalon* drifting through perennial beds; gives movement and color in midsummer.
- *Allium moly* 'Jeannine' with *Sesleria autumnalis* or *Sporobolus heterolepis*
- *Allium unifolium* with perennial *Geraniums*, such as 'Rozanne' or *sanguineum*
- *Camassia* with ornamental grasses or ferns
- *Erythronium* 'Pagoda' with cream-edged hosta
- *Narcissus* 'Thalia' or 'Avalanche' and/or Tulip 'Angelique' with *Brunnera macrophylla*
- *Narcissus* 'Avalanche' partnered with *Mertensia virginica*, Virginia bluebells
- *Nectaroscordum* is an ideal companion to ornamental grasses and natural garden area
- Tulip 'Queen of the Night' with *Heuchera* and silver foliage, such as Japanese painted ferns
- *Tulipa tarda*, *Anemone blanda*, *Puschkinia*, other small minor bulbs between hostas and other late emerging perennials to color the ground before their leaves appear and unfold.
- *Galanthus* will brighten up dark, shady areas of the garden; ideal under trees and sprinkled in ground cover beds in the shade. Ideal with ferns.