

## Landscape Design Elements that Incorporate Bulbs

*Article by Jackie Schwitter, Collin County Master Gardener*

Design elements in your landscape will determine how these bulbs fit into your yard. Trees typically have not leafed out in early spring, and perennials are still asleep. Shrubs and groundcover are probably the only green surviving the winter. Think about planting your spring blooming bulbs in these areas.

Plan your garden design utilizing combinations of bulbs, drift plantings, or clumps among annuals and perennials. Choose bulbs that bloom in early, mid, and late spring to give your bed or pot perpetual color. Mass planting bulbs using monochromatic colors (shades of one color) creates a dramatic impact. For example, a mass planting of the tiny, early blooming yellow Narcissus Tete-a-Tete shouts, "Spring is Here!" A drift of cobalt blue Muscari armeniacum can give the impression of a blue river.

Complimentary colors (those opposite on the color wheel) create a vibrant effect and draw the eye into your garden. By adding Narcissus Professor Einstein behind the Muscari, you can expect a pop of color as the white and orange rise above the blue.

For emphasis, plant the bulbs in clusters of 12 or more. Combining bulbs with other bulbs or seasonal annuals and perennials creates interest and attracts attention to different parts of your yard.

A succession of blooms either in one bed or with pops of color in various beds prolongs the enchantment. Plant early blooming tiny yellow Tete-a-Tete with blue Ipheion Rolf Fiedler for an early start. For mid spring, combine Muscari with taller Tahiti daffodils. Narcissus Delnashaugh with low, trailing white Candy Tuft would be lovely. White Allium Cowanii can transition to late spring blue Dutch Iris Blue Magic and the exquisite pink Asiatic Lily Elodie. Your show will last from mid-January through May!

Consider the **mature size** of the spring blooming bulbs. Utilize plants of various sizes with the largest in the back of the bed. Miniature Tete-a-Tete daffodils in front with larger double daffodil Tahiti in the middle and taller Professor Einstein bringing up the rear creates a lovely display.

### Companion Planting

Companion plants with similar growth habits provide a pleasing look. Bulbs can be planted among perennials or shrubs which will hide the foliage after blooming. Their colors, textures and shapes complement each other. Consider low growing evergreens or drought tolerant perennials that are cut to the ground in early spring, to fill the empty spaces just as your spring blooming bulbs are spent. Examples are

Autumn Joy Sedum, Blackfoot Daisy, Coreopsis, Mexican Mint Marigold, Mexican Oregano, Rain Lilies, Skullcap, Turks Cap, and Zexmenia. With this technique you can hide the fading foliage after your bulbs bloom, and fill empty spaces in your yard with new color and interest that will last from spring to fall.

Sound like fun. Plan ahead, then enjoy your creation this spring.

For more information about planting and caring for your bulbs, please refer to the Bulb Planting Guide or Bulb Planting Video at <http://www.ccmgatx.org/bulbs>.