

What's Growing On in the garden?

Germantown Hills School Garden Newsletter

March 26, 2007

Spring Flowering Bulbs

Flowering bulbs are a wonderful addition to any landscape garden. They offer a much needed burst of color after a long cold winter. Spring flowering bulbs require a cold period to flower. Illinois winters are perfect! These bulbs must be planted in the fall for the spring bloom. Most bulbs are perennial; they will come back year after year with very little care. We planted a garden of bulbs, plus a few are scattered throughout the garden. We will discuss the types of bulbs we planted in order of their bloom. (Note: Central Illinois is zone 5a. Plants with this zone or lower will survive our winters.)

Common Snowdrop - *Galanthus nivalis* Hardy to Zone 4.



How to Plant: bulb; plant 3 inches deep and 3 inches apart in fall

Habit: upright; 6 to 8 inches

Foliage: 2 to 3 leaves; 1/4 inch wide; 6 inches long

Flower: white except for green crescent around the notch of inner floral segments; external floral segments longer than inner ones; flower drooping; 1/2 inch across; borne on slender stalk; very early spring; cultivars may have more green in flowers or be doubled

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Culture: plant in partial to full shade; moist, well-drained soil with high organic matter; naturalize in large drifts; propagate by dividing clumps immediately after flowering

Crocus - *Crocus species* Hardy to Zone 4.



How to Plant: corm; plant 3 inches deep and 4 inches apart in fall

Habit: upright; 6 inches

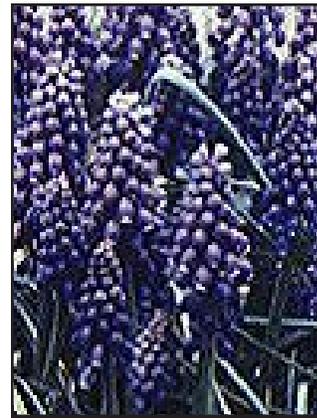
Foliage: grasslike; dark green; curved; silver striped down center of leaf; leaves shorter than flowers, then expand to 8 to 12 inches after flowering

Flower: 1 1/2 to 8 inches long; white, yellow, purple or striped; usually borne singly; close at night or on cloudy days; spring

Culture: plant in well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade; may be naturalized in lawns if foliage is allowed to ripen properly

Note: There are Crocus species that flower in autumn.

Grape Hyacinth - *Muscari botryoides* Hardy to Zone 4.



How to Plant: bulb; plant 3 inches deep and 4 inches apart in early fall

Habit: upright; 6 to 12 inches

Foliage: 6 to 8 basal leaves; up to 12 inches long and 1/3 inch wide; dark green on lower surface; appear in autumn and remain green through winter; dormant in summer

Flower: 12 to 20 flowers in terminal cluster on leafless flower stem; each flower urn shaped and

drooping; blue or white; 1/8 inch long; early spring

Culture: fertile, sandy soil in full sun or partial shade; plant in masses for best effect

Note: Certain species self seeds more aggressively and are more invasive.

Daffodil (also known as Narcissus or Jonquil)- *Narcissus species* Zone varies



How to Plant: bulb; plant 6 inches deep and 6 to 12 inches apart (smaller species bulbs require more shallow placement)

Habit: upright; 6 to 24 inches

Foliage: about 3/4 inch wide; up to 15 inches long; shiny green

Flower: one or several flowers to a stalk; 6 lower segments white or yellow; trumpet long and tubular or short and cuplike, white, pink, yellow, orange and orange-red;

flowers single or double; extremely variable.

Culture: well-drained soil enriched with organic matter; divide every fourth year after leaves have died; easy to grow; remove faded flowers so they don't set seeds

Note: The name daffodil applies primarily to flowers with large trumpets and can be used for all members of the genus; the name narcissus is derived from the genus name Narcissus.

Tulip - *Tulipa species* Zone varies



How to Plant: bulb; plant 4 to 8 inches deep and 4 to 8 inches apart in fall; deep planting (within reason) discourages bulbs multiplication and encourages good-sized flowers for several years; species tulips usually require shallower planting

Habit: upright or clumped; 6 to 30 inches

Foliage: usually basal; thick bluish green; untoothed; 6 to 10 inches long; Kaufmanniana and Greigii

hybrids often have burgundy-or purple-mottled leaves

and sepals (except doubles); multitude of colors and flower forms (there are over 400 named cultivars: common classes are Mendel, Fosteriana hybrids, Kaufmanniana hybrids, Greigii hybrids, Triumph, Darwin hybrid, Lily-flowered, Cottage, Rembrandt, Parrot, Double-flowered and Species tulips); early spring to spring

Culture: plant in well-drained, sandy, humus-rich soil in full sun or partial shade; tulips look better if they are planted in masses; bulbs may be moved or discarded in midsummer after foliage has withered; remove faded flowers to avoid seed set. Some gardeners plant new tulip bulbs each year. Tulip leaves should be left in place until they're almost completely yellow, about late June.

Then use scissors and cut them to the ground. The leaves should be left on as long as they are green because they are making food for next year's flowers. If the leaves are unsightly, you could tie them together loosely and plant annuals in between.

Grade School Teachers' ABC Garden:

In the ABC garden, you might recall that not last spring, but the spring before that, each grade level at the elementary building planted a different type of bulb.

There were crocuses, grape hyacinths, daffodils and lots of pink tulips. Here's a picture of how it looked last spring. Let's hope for some brilliant color this year, too!!!! Keep your eyes open for these beauties as they pop out of the ground and bloom. At least in their location, we don't have to worry about them being eaten by the deer!!

(A= Almond bush, B=Boxwood, Bell, Burning Bush, C= crocus, D= daffodil, Dry Creek, Dirt, Dwarf bushes, F=Forsythia and Flowering Almond, G= Grape Hyacinths, Grate,) More letters to come!



Websites and Resources

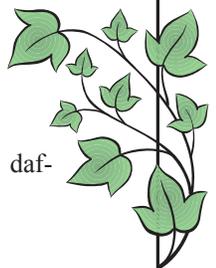
Teachers: Looking for some spring wallpaper for your computers? Try this link:

<http://garden.calyx.garden.org/home> and scroll down to Community and Wallpaper.

There you will find several pages filled with photos of gorgeous blooms!!! Look for Grape hyacinths, daffodils, etc.

For more information on growing bulbs: <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/bulbs>

Please feel free to contact either Cathy or Linda with your garden questions and comments. We encourage you to use the garden as the valuable educational resource that it can be.



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