

Summer Blooming Bulbs

Spring & Summer is the time to enjoy bulbs outdoors. Many gardens have a variety of spring-blooming bulbs, from the common tulip to the fragrant hyacinth & the delightful daffodil. These spring-flowering bulbs have been planted in the fall of the previous year. The bulbs we see flowering in the summer are planted in the spring and late-fall-flowering bulbs are planted in August. Read on to discover what to do when your spring bulbs are finished blooming & what bulbs are available for summer interest.

CARE OF SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS AFTER THEY HAVE FADED

The blooming season for spring bulbs extends from February to the beginning of May. These bulbs have a distinct life cycle. They become dormant during summer when the weather is warm. The cooler temperatures & increased water supply of fall brings the bulbs out of their dormant state. During this time, the bulb is busy growing strong roots to support itself for the winter months, when it will become dormant again. When spring arrives with its warmer temperatures & longer day length, the bulb will flower, using food stored the previous year. When the flower fades, all that is left are the leaves. This is a good time to feed bulbs **GARDENWORKS™** 3-15-8 Bulb Food, for the green leaves are manufacturing food to store in preparation for next year's bloom. Soon the leaves turn yellow as the summer heat arrives, & the cycle begins again. Once 70% of the leaves turn yellow cut the leaves off at ground level & the bulb will go dormant & re-flower next spring. It is okay to plant your summer annuals on top of these bulbs. The care of your annuals will also help feed the bulbs below during summer & fall.

PLANTING SUMMER-BLOOMING BULBS

The best site for bulbs is on well-drained soil with organic matter added. A 5-10cm (3") layer of decomposed leaves spread over the area is very beneficial. After choosing an appropriate site for your bulbs to grow, dig with a fork or spade to loosen the soil. Add either **GARDENWORKS™** Bulb Food or Bone Meal to the soil to stimulate strong root development. eye (growth bud) is facing you before burying the bulb. If you are planting small bulbs like cyclamen & anemones, use a trowel to dig a hole at the

recommended depth (found on the back of the package). For larger bulbs, such as dahlia tubers & cannas, it is better to dig a large hole & mix the bulb food or bone meal at the bottom of the hole. Place the bulb on top of this mix, making sure that the eye (growth bud) is facing you before burying the bulb. When the bulb leaves have yellowed & fallen over, cut them down to soil level. Different types of bulbs die down at

A LIST OF SUMMER-BLOOMING FAVOURITES

ACIDANTHERA (*ACIDANTHERA SPP.*)

Soil: Average Light: Full sun to light shade
Planting Depth: 5cm (2")
Planting Distance: 5" (15cm)

Acidanthera adds fragrance to your garden. This plant sends up creamy flowers with dark centres two months after the corms are planted. Each two-foot stem holds four or more buds that open one flower at a time. In Vancouver's climate, dig up the corms in fall and store in vermiculite at 2 to 7°C.

BEGONIA, TUBEROUS (*Begonia sp.*)

Soil: Rich, moist soil
Light: Part shade
Planting Depth: 5cm (2-3")
Planting Distance: 20cm (8")

Beguiling tuberous begonias have spectacular flowers, ranging from two inches to eight inches across & from solid red, through yellow to white in colour. Shapes are varied, resembling a rosebud, camellia, narcissus, or carnation. Plant begonia tubers indoors in March or April. Keep them warm; at least 18-20°C (65°F) and in bright light. When roots develop (usually in three weeks), replant the tubers one inch below the surface of potting soil in a large pot. Transplant outdoors after danger of frost is past. Fertilize every other week with **GARDENWORKS™** 5-30-15 fertilizer at 1/2 strength for peak growth.

CALLA LILIES (*Zantedeschia spp.*)

Soil: Neutral

Light: Full sun to light shade

Planting Depth: 10cm (4")

Planting Distance: 30-40cm (12-15")

Callas, native to South Africa, have long leaves arising from a thick rhizome. This spectacular flower should find a home in almost every BC garden. In frost-free areas, grow Calla Lilies in a moist, sunny to semi-shady location with soil that has been amended with a lot of organic matter. After planting the rhizomes, water liberally and feed monthly, with **GARDENWORKS™** Bulb Food, during the growing season. After the flowers fade, reduce the amount of water. Only the white calla lily is hardy in B.C. The bright coloured cultivars need to be stored for winter. Allow the plants to dry out. Dig the rhizomes and store in dry material for the winter.

CANNA LILIES

Soil: Neutral

Light: Full sun to light shade

Planting Depth: 10cm (4")

Planting Distance: 20-30cm (10-12")

If you want a bright, happy, tropical-style garden but you don't live in the tropics, think about planting Canna lilies. Cannas are undergoing a new wave of popularity now that warm colours and bold foliage are back in style. Most cannas like a sunny position, but off-white flowering varieties prefer dappled shade. They grow well in moist soil enriched with organic matter such as compost. Fertilize in late winter with **GARDENWORKS™** Bulb Food. Water well before and after fertilizing. Cannas also respond well to applications of well-rotted steer manure. Keep plants mulched and water well, particularly during dry spells. Remove spent flower heads to maintain an attractive display. Do not cut off more than about 15cm (6"), as new flowers will be forming lower down the stem. At the end of the flowering season, cut old stems down to within 2cm (1") of the ground. Leave new young shoots - these will flower early next season. In our climate these plants are hardy during winter but need some protection from our changeable weather. Place 2-5cm of bark mulch over the top of the planting area. Remove this in spring. Lift and divide the clumps every three years.

DAHLIA (*Dahlia spp.*)

Soil: Rich, moist soil

Light: Full sun or part shade

Planting Depth: 5-10cm (2-4")

Planting Distance: 20-30cm (10-20")

Dabble in dahlias if you want sure-fire colour from mid-summer to frost. Types vary from the dwarfs used for edging through larger single, anemone, peony, cactus, water lily, colarette, ball and pompon types. Some are sturdy six-footers. Buy tubers to start larger dahlias. Cover the tuber with only an inch of soil. Fill in later as the shoot grows. Make a shallow basin around the plant to catch water. Use a low-nitrogen fertilizer formulated for bulbs such as **GARDENWORKS™** Bulb Food. Mulch to keep roots cool and the ground moist and free of weeds.

IRIS RETICULATA (*Iris reticulata*)

Soil: Alkaline

Light: Full sun to light shade

Planting Depth: 10cm (4")

Planting Distance: 15-20cm (6-8")

Standing only four to six inches tall, the *reticulata* is best used at the front of a mixed border or in a rock garden. Cultivar Joyce has large flowers for its class. The pale blue falls are blotched with orange and blue uprights. Another variety is deep purple with an orange blotch. A pale blue variety has white markings on the dark blue falls.

Iris reticulata is a member of the vast iris tribe. This is a bulbous iris; other members of the group grow from rhizomes or tubers. It's reasonably perennial in Zone 4 with a mulch for winter protection.

LILY, HARDY (*Lilium spp.*)

Soil: Rich, well-drained

Light: Full sun

Planting Depth: 20cm (8") exceptions are Madonna lilies,

2-5cm (1") and Turk's-cap lilies, 5cm (2")

When you add lilies to the summer flower garden, you add a long season of colour and dazzling blooms. Depending on the type and variety, lilies will bloom from late spring until early fall, providing a strong backdrop in mixed borders. Growing 1-3m (3-9ft) tall, lilies have funnel or bowl-shaped flowers that may be erect, outward facing or nodding. Plant all the hardy lilies soon after they arrive, because they are never truly dormant. Add a handful of **GARDENWORKS™** Bone Meal to the bottom of each bulb hole and a 2-3" layer of straw as mulch over the top. Cutting individual lilies to float in bowls won't harm next year's bulb strength, but don't cut long stems of many in your border. Lilies need stems and leaves to build up strength for next year's blooms.

LILY, TENDER (*Lilium spp.*)

Soil: Average

Light: Full sun to light shade

Planting Depth: Varies by species

Planting Distance: Varies by species

Tender lilies comprise plants and species that include rhizomes, tubers and bulbs. Be sure to get specific directions for each (see Calla and Canna on this list). Some, such as the Spider Lily, are hardy in certain climates. The Gloriosa Lily (*Gloriosa rothschildiana*) is an excellent climber and the Spider Lily (*Hymenocallis narciss flora*) makes a fast-growing, unusual addition to your garden. There are as many uses for tender lilies as there are wonderful choices.

There are, of course, many more perennial plants that are grown from bulbs and tubers at **GARDENWORKS™** than just the ones we have listed, you'll find shade-loving Caladiums, Freesias for cutting and so many more. Be sure to come in and check out the selection. Plus our staff of garden experts are here to answer all your bulb questions, and help you choose the best ones suited to your specific garden.



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Everything to Make Your Garden Work!