

2018- The Year of Tulips

Each year the [National Garden Bureau](#) selects one bulb, annual, perennial and vegetable to showcase, with plants being chosen for their popularity, variety, ease of growth, wide adaptability and versatility. This year the featured bulb is the tulip, which say “spring” like no other flowers.

Their vivid, paint-box colors are a feast for winter-weary eyes. These members of the lily family typically grow a single stem and flower from teardrop-shaped bulbs that are planted in fall for spring flowers. Tulip bulbs require a dormancy period with cool, winter-like temperatures. During this time, the bulbs sprout roots and the embryonic leaves and flowers inside the bulb begin to develop.

Tulips are native to southern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and Asia. Works of art depicting their distinctive shape date back to the 10th century. They have been cultivated in earnest for at least 400 years. By leveraging the tulip’s natural tendency toward diversity, generations of breeders and tulip collectors, have brought forth a mind-boggling array of flower forms, heights, colors and bloom times. Today, Holland produces most of the world’s annual tulip crop, which exceeds 4 billion bulbs annually.

It’s been said that various colors of tulips have significant meaning when gifted: Red means love, white means I’m sorry and purple represents loyalty.



Basic Types and Varieties

There are over 150 species of tulips with over 3,000 different varieties and are classified into Divisions by type:

Division 1: Single Early. Medium size blossoms with a classic tulip shape. Short, sturdy stems with an overall height of 10-14". Often fragrant. [Flair](#), [Purple Prince](#), [Bestseller](#), [Apricot Beauty](#)

Division 2: Double Early. Extra petals give these flowers a full look. Shorter than most other tulips, most are about 12" tall. Lovely cut flowers. [Abba](#), [Monsella](#), [Foxtrot](#), [Monte Orange](#)

Division 3: Triumph. This class offers the widest range of tulip colors. Triumphs are midseason bloomers and stand 15 to 20". [Barcelona](#), [Bastogne](#), [Jimmy](#), [Princess Irene](#), [Ronaldo](#)

Division 4: Darwin Hybrid. Strong plants with large flowers. Bulbs often return and bloom for several years. Mid-Spring. 22" tall. [Ad Rem](#), [Apricot Impression](#), [Banja Luka](#), [Pink Impression](#)

Division 5: Single Late. Tall, egg-shaped flowers are large and long-lasting. Regal presence in the landscape. Heat tolerant. 22" tall. [La Courtine](#), [Menton](#), [Dordogne](#), [Violet Beauty](#)

Division 6: Lily-Flowered. Long, narrow cups with pointed petals that flare out at the top. Excellent for cutting. 12-20" tall. [Elegant Lady](#), [Marilyn](#), [Merlot](#), [Pieter de Leur](#), [Sapporo](#)

Division 7: Fringed. The top edge of each petal is whiskered and often slightly paler in color. Bloom time is mid to late spring. Overall height 20". [Carousel](#), [Fancy Frills](#), [Lambada](#), [Red Wing](#)

Division 8: Viridiflora. Streaks of green give these tulips a distinctive look. Most cultivars bloom mid to late spring. Long-lasting cut flowers. 20" tall. [Groenland](#), [Spring Green](#), [Flaming Spring Green](#), [Artist](#)

Division 9: Rembrandt. Petals display exotic markings and color breaks. Resemble the tulips in 17th-century paintings. 20-24" tall. [Rembrandt Mix](#)

Division 10: Parrot. Ruffled, puckered and fringed petals twist as they mature. Excellent cut flowers. Heights vary from 14-22". [Black Parrot](#), [Estella Rijnveld](#), [Silver Parrot](#), [Texas Flame](#)

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Division 11: Double Late. Plush, peony-like flowers are long-lasting in the garden or in a vase. Many cultivars are fragrant. 15-22" tall. [Angelique](#), [Carnaval De Nice](#), [Upstar](#), [Yellow Pomponette](#)

Division 12: Kaufmanniana. Early bloomers with a tall, narrow cup and pointed petals. Blossoms open out flat in the sun. 8-10" tall. [Johann Strauss](#), [Scarlet Baby](#), [Stresa](#), [Heart's Delight](#)

Division 13: Fosteriana. Also known as Emperor tulips. Big flowers are 4-5" tall and open wide on sunny days. Early spring. 18" tall. [Albert Heijn](#), [Orange Emperor](#), [Purissima](#), [Red Emperor](#)

Division 14: Greigii. Decorative foliage adds to the appeal of these flowers. Some cultivars have two to four flowers per stem. 12" tall. [Mary Ann](#), [Quebec](#), [Red Riding Hood](#), [Toronto](#)

Division 15: Species. Wild or wild-like cultivars with relatively small flowers on slender stems. Good naturalizers. 4-10" tall. [Lilac Wonder](#), [Lady Jane](#), [Peppermint Stick](#)

Division 16: Multiflowering. Sometimes called "bouquet" tulips. Three to five flowers per stem extends bloom time and impact. 14-20" tall. [Candy Club](#), [Flaming Club](#), [Happy Family](#)



Garden How-to's

Purchase tulip bulbs that are large, firm and heavy. Store the bulbs in a cool, dark place until planting time.

Plant tulips in mid to late fall, when you are raking leaves and doing other fall clean up chores. Soil temperature should be 55°F or cooler. Choose a planting location with full to part day sun, where the soil is well drained and easy to dig (never soggy). Loosen the soil to a depth of 10".

Tulips look best when they are planted in informal groups of 12 or more bulbs. Space the bulbs approximately 3 to 4" on center and plant them 6 to 7" deep. Use a garden trowel to plant individual bulbs or remove the soil from the planting area, place the bulbs and then refill the hole.

Tulips are at their best the first spring after planting. For this reason, the bulbs are usually treated as annuals and dug out when they finish blooming. Under ideal growing conditions (sharply drained soil, cold winters, cool springs, hot, dry summers) some tulips will return to bloom again another year. The best candidates are Darwin hybrids and Species tulips. To encourage re-blooming, cut off the spent flowers as soon as they fade and allow the foliage to continue growing until it is yellow and dry.

This article is provided by the National Garden Bureau, <http://www.ngb.org>. Visit their website for more information on this year's featured plants.

Your Suggestions are Welcome!

Is there a lawn and gardening topic you would like to learn more about? Sarah Browning is an Extension Educator with Nebraska Extension and can be contacted by phone 402 441-7180, by mail at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE 68528: or by e-mail sarah.browning@unl.edu.