

garden



By **Roger Myers**
American Beauty Landscaping

Roger Myers is the President and Founder of American Beauty Landscaping. Established in 1979, ABL is the Valley's industry leader with over 90 National, State and Local awards to its landscape design and build credit.

FALL PLANNING BRINGS SPRING SPLENDOR

As I am writing this, hurricane Rita is bearing down on Texas/Louisiana, the second massive storm in two weeks. No one knows what damage and destruction will result, but I am sure it will be heart-breaking for many.

You know, a lot of folks here in Ohio (including me) have complained over the years about all our rain, the cloudy days, the cool temps or the frequent snows. When you look at it; it really isn't so bad after all! You just have to put it into perspective. Look, the South is a great place to visit, but I just really wouldn't want to live there!

Though Fall is upon us, and Winter is around the corner, before you know it Spring will arrive.

With Spring the first blush of color will be brought to you by a wide variety of Spring bulbs. Tulips, Daffodils, Crocus, Hyacinths and Muscari to name a few.

And though Spring may seem like a long way off – now is the time to plan for your Spring bulbs.

The many bulb catalogs are in your mailbox, so take some time to decide how you want your beds to look next Spring.

With some thoughtful planning, a little design savvy and creativity, you can produce some knockout, car-stopping displays next Spring! And growing bulbs are probably the easiest flower to grow. Here are some tips from years of practice at American Beauty Landscaping.

What bulbs are best?

Three types of spring bulbs are by far the most popular – Daffodils, Hyacinths and everyone's favorite - the Tulip.

Tulips are the prize – nothing is more breathtaking than masses of Tulips in sweeps of color. And color is the Tulip's advantage. Tulips come in infinite colors, and range in height from 8"-24". The varieties of species bloom from early to late Spring.

Key to great Tulips is great bulbs – the bigger the better. New varieties of doubles resemble Roses or Peonies, new colors include blues, blacks and even greens! Plant tightly, approximately 3" apart and tens are better than just a few – and hundreds are awesome! Plant in mass, but be mindful of the plants that must remain for weeks after the blossoms are gone. If your variety is a hybrid, chances are, it won't return next year, in that case you may want to remove the plants, as you prepare for spring annuals.

Daffodils, or the smaller Narcissus are the symbol of spring. Predominately yellow, or

white, masses of Daffodils popping up in wood lots, near trees, or fields, in an informal arrangement are most attractive.

Unlike Tulips which work best in rows, Daffodils should be planted in groups of 7-12 per hole. These will become groups of plants, and these groups can be randomly located, and scattered about the garden. Daffodils have two major advantages over Tulips – they will continue to multiply year after year and they are deer resistant. New varieties are sporting center cups of peach, pink, bright orange to pale yellow. The doubles are spectacular truly resembling a peony blossom; you need to try it. You can be sure that your Daffodils will come back year after year, in greater numbers of course – making them a terrific plant to naturalize throughout your landscape.

My favorite Hyacinth is the mini Muscari Armeniacum in vivid blue, or white. I use them as companion plants with the Tulips and Daffodils, and they make beautiful borders. It takes hundreds to make a showing, the bulb is button sized, and cost around 12-18 cents each. You plant them in mass trenches just 2" below the surface. They will continue to multiply, and require little maintenance. As with all bulbs, I like to use a bulb fertilizer like "Bulb Tone", when I plant, for best results.

When to Plant

The general rule is the larger the bulb, the sooner you should plant. Small ones like Muscari, or Crocus can go in, in late November. I like to plant anytime throughout October, once the soils have softened from the fall rains. When planting hundreds of large bulbs, I find that an auger bit attached to a common cordless drill works wonders. Forget the bulb shovel – unless you're planting only a few.

Remember - Landscaping For Life!