



## Plant Tulips and Daffodils for Color in Spring

Can you imagine a spring without tulips in a rainbow of colors and dazzling daffodils blooming in the landscape? After a drab and dreary winter, we long for these harbingers of spring to signal the end of winter. They announce the arrival of spring in a way no other plants can.

Tulips were once the most coveted flower in the world enchanting kings and bewitching emperors. Today, we may not consider having tulips as a sign of great wealth but their blooms are the sweet signal spring is here to stay.



There are beautiful varieties in all of the fifteen groups in which tulips are categorized, but the Darwin hybrids and species types are the most likely to return year after year. They are among the tallest varieties known for their large flowers shaped like perfect pyramids when closed. Open, they measure up to six inches across. There are cultivars available in just about any color or combination of colors from pastel to pulsating.

Plant them 6 to 8 inches deep in very well-drained soil in a spot that receives full sun in spring. Be sure to plant plenty so you will have extra to cut for bouquets. Their long, strong stems make them perfect cut flowers.

Apeldoorn's Elite is a showstopper. Golden yellow petals are heavily streaked with bright red. The flowers of Apricot Impression boast a charming blend of rose pink and apricot. Daydream sports flowers that open the color of sunshine and then ages beautifully to soft apricot orange.

One of the most popular tulips, Pink Impression has luminous clear pink blooms. As its name suggests, White Clouds presents huge snow white flowers.

Squirrels and chipmunks are the bane of gardeners who plant tulips. They find tulip bulbs as delicious as we find them beautiful. Instead of giving up on tulips, outsmart rodent marauders. Lay a piece of chicken wire covered with mulch over newly-planted tulips. Or create a cage of chicken wire by laying a piece at the base of the planting hole and folding the sides up and over tulip bulbs.

Interplant tulips with alliums. Their odor is unappealing to rodents. You can also try repellents like fox urine or hot pepper wax. Some gardeners have varying degrees of success with homemade concoctions. Or plant daffodils instead.

Daffodils are shunned by rodents. The second part of this bulb dynamic duo, daffodils have been grown since ancient times. They are grouped into thirteen classifications depending on their size and flower form. Their height may be as petite as six inches or reach up to two feet; their flowers

can be single or double. Stems may host a single bloom or host multiple flowers in shades of yellow, white, orange, red, pink and green.



Daffodils are enduring and often outlive the gardeners who plant them. Plant bulbs up to 6 inches deep in well-drained soil in part shade or full sun. Remove flowers and stems after their blooms have faded, but leave the foliage until it yellows. Until it is completely yellow, it is feeding the bulb for the following year's flowers.

The fragrant flowers of Jetfire feature golden yellow petals and orange-red cups. A small daffodil, growing 8 to 10 inches tall, Jetfire is also a suitable selection for rock gardens.

Add some sunshine to rainy spring days with Dick Wilden. Large double flowers sports ruffled cups of gold surrounded by two layers of lemon yellow petals.

Ice King is another double-flowered daffodil but this handsome selection boasts a frilly center filled with tones of yellow and white encircled by an outer ring of white petals. Dutch Master shows off huge golden yellow blooms held on sturdy 18 to 20 inch stems.

Thalia boasts very fragrant white flowers. Multiple blooms are borne on each stem. A brilliant bi-colored type, Goblet, presents bright yellow ruffled cups showcased by creamy white petals. Its cups pale to soft yellow as they mature.

Salome adds a unique twist to your bulb plantings. Pure white petals showcase elegant cups that open peachy yellow and mature to salmon-pink.

Plant tulips and daffodils at the bases of deciduous shrubs. Plant them in large drifts in perennial borders. Plant them in beds of dark green groundcovers like ivy or periwinkle. Interplant them with other types of bulbs. Just plant them!

With just a little time and effort, planting bulbs now pays off big time. You'll pat yourself on the back while accepting kudos from the neighbors when your landscape sparkles in spring.



*Diana Stoll is a horticulturist and the garden center manager at The Planter's Palette, 28W571 Roosevelt Rd., Winfield, IL 60190. Call 630-293-1040 ext. 2 or visit their website at [www.planterpalette.com](http://www.planterpalette.com).*