



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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Secrets for a Colorful Garden

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When making plans for your spring garden, keep in mind that the most important element is color. It is probably the single most powerful garden design factor.

To create visually appealing and alluring gardens you must know how to effectively combine colors. The distinction between warm and cool colors is important to the gardener for several reasons.

Cool colors (blue, lavender and violet) tend to recede and are good for close up viewing. Warm colors (orange, red, and yellow) tend to advance and will make a bold, dramatic statement even when planted at the far end of the garden.

Be careful of cool and warm color combinations. If your garden is primarily cool colored, a mass of flame orange tulips in the background would divert attention from the more subtle colors in the foreground and disrupt the harmonious effect.

A surefire recipe for success is to plant in color schemes found in nature. For example, to achieve the colors of a sunset plant reds, oranges and yellows. For the look of fire, plant purples, oranges and yellows. My personal favorite is an ocean scheme with blues, purples, and whites.

Keep in mind that you can plant different varieties of bulbs. Mix and match to find something that suits your style. For example, violet pansies look beautiful next to pink and yellow tulips ... or plant yellow tulips with grape hyacinths. You can create something new and beautiful with each bulb. When you consider that bulbs come in different sizes and have varying bloom times, you can design your garden to always display the maximum amount of color. But resist the temptation to plant just a handful of each bulb or color. Mass color plantings are always much more eye-catching.

Once you have decided on a color scheme it's time to pick out your bulbs at Johnson's Garden Center. We carry a wide variety of spring-flowering bulbs from the majestic yellow 'King Alfred' Daffodil to the white 'Madame Sophie' Double Hyacinth. The list goes on and on ...

Most small bulbs (daffodils, crocus, etc.) should be planted when it starts to cool off in mid September to October. Tulips prefer to be planted around Election Day in November, although we always recommend that you shop early for the best selection.

To maximize flowering next spring, mix Johnson's Bulb Planting Package into the soil at planting time. This recipe contains Hi-Yield Bone Meal, American Brand Dutch Bulb Food and Cotton Boll Compost. Start by mixing the compost into the soil to loosen it up. Then mix in the bone meal and the bulb food. Plant the bulbs at the proper planting depth (generally three times the width of the bulb) and then add a layer of mulch to help retain moisture and to protect from the winter chill.

Be sure to stop by Johnson's Garden Center this fall for Wichita's best selection of spring-flowering bulbs. There are many different varieties for you to choose from and enjoy. Our staff will be more than willing to help you come up with a color scheme or help you with planting suggestions. Then you'll be well on your way to a beautiful garden.