

Department of Plant Sciences

PLANTS FOR TENNESSEE LANDSCAPES: BULBS FOR THE GARDEN

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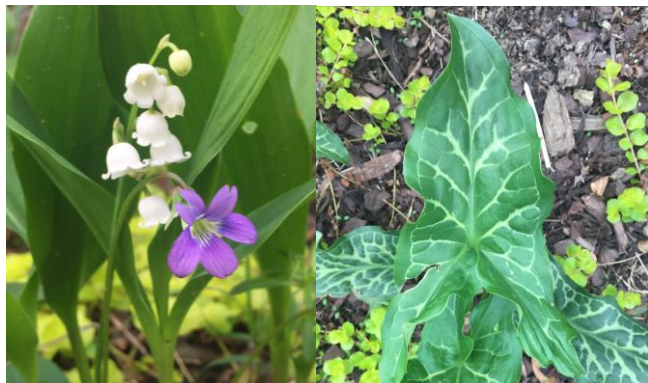
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In gardening terms, the word bulb is often used in a general sense to describe the entire group of geophytes, plants that use underground organs for storage. Geophytes can be broken up into many storage types including corms, tubers, rhizomes and true bulbs.

Geophyte storage structures and examples

Storage Structure	Examples
<i>Corm</i>	Crocus, Gladiolus
<i>Tuber</i>	Caladium, Dahlia (tuberous root), Daylily
<i>Rhizome</i>	Iris, Lily-of-the-valley, Canna
<i>Bulb</i>	Allium, Tulip, Daffodil, Lily

The following list addresses all forms as bulbs. Additional information on geophyte classification, planting depths, chilling hours and maintenance can be found in UT Extension publication “Flowering Bulbs for Tennessee Gardens PB 1610.”



Left to Right: *Convallaria majalis*, Lily-of-the-valley;
Arum italicum, Italian Arum



Left to Right: Convallaria

While spring flowering bulbs may garner the most attention, bulbs can be selected to provide excitement throughout the year. From the refreshing blooms of spring daffodils and summer lilies to the striking foliage of Italian Arum in the coldest months of winter, bloom and foliage can be found for every season.

The world of bulbs is vast and options can be overwhelming even for a seasoned gardener. Planting specifically for successive seasonal interest is a great place to start. The following list identifies bloom period and foliage interest and will serve as a useful planning reference. Succession planting within a specific species can also have an impressive impact in the garden. Bloom initiation and length are varied among cultivars and can be manipulated to our advantage. For example, by planting various daffodil cultivars with early, mid, and late season bloom displays we create the illusion of everlasting blooms.

As you begin your research into bulbs, you may see the term ephemeral used frequently. Ephemeral simply means that the plant wilts down and disappears during its non-active growing season but will re-emerge when conditions once again become agreeable.

About the List

Bulbs are organized in alphabetical order by scientific name with common names listed underneath. The column with heading A/P/TP refers to the bulbs botanic grouping Annual, Perennial, or Tender Perennial respectively. A bulb's classification as annual or perennial may be dependent upon its species, cultivar, planting site within the state or even microclimates within your own garden.

Most bulbs need at least a few hours of sunlight to prosper and perform well, and inadequate exposure can certainly be a limiting factor to bloom production. When considering light requirements, take into account growth and bloom periods of the bulb in relation to shade cast by deciduous trees. Locations in the shadow of full canopies during the summer may receive adequate sunlight after leaf fall to support sun-loving bulbs' development. In the recommendation list, light needs are identified as either Full Sun (six or more hours of sun), Part Sun or Shade.

An area in full shade of a deciduous canopy in the summer could provide well over six hours of sunlight during the winter/early spring. Spring blooming bulbs requiring full to part sun conditions could thrive in this setting. However, summer blooming bulbs requiring full sun could not.

Light requirements should be kept in mind even after flowering. Foliage is necessary to generate energy for the following year's blooms and they will need access to sunlight to achieve this. Thus, removing foliage immediately after flowering is strongly discouraged. However, foliage may be removed once it begins to yellow, signaling that its work is complete.

To aid in garden planning and purchasing bulbs, planting time has been denoted in its own column. Most spring blooming bulbs require fall planting and vice versa, so general bloom times have also been included.

Cultivars that are known to perform well in the Tennessee landscape are listed, and the comments column provides brief plant descriptions, site requirements and other helpful information.

Many of these bulbs are southern pass-along plants that may be flourishing at abandoned home sites but difficult to find at local retailers. The bulbs so often offered at large commercial retail establishments may not be the best choice for our region. Quality and cultivar selection may also be barriers. However, specialty sources for bulbs can be found online, and are sure to satisfy quality, selection, suitability, and affordability for the consumer.

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Please use the following list as a guide while identifying the most satisfying performers for your Tennessee home garden.



Top to Bottom: *Lilium* hybrid, Black Beauty; *Lycoris radiate*, Red Spider Lily; *Claytonia virginica*, Spring Beauty

Scientific Name Common Name	A P TP	Light Needs			Planting Time	Bloom Time	Cultivars	Comments
		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Agapanthus spp.</i> Lily of the Nile	A	X			Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Best planted in a container . Wide strappy foliage . Some cultivars claim to be more hardy
<i>Allium aflatunense</i> Persian Onion	P	X			Fall	Late Spring	. Purple Sensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Tennis ball size blooms . Shades of purple
<i>Allium caeruleum</i> Blue Allium	P	X			Fall	Late Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Blue two-inch blooms . 1-1.5-foot stems
<i>Allium christophii</i> Star of Persia Allium	P	X			Fall	Late Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . While common in the trade, not recommended for the South . They are not persistent in the garden. . Unique star like metallic blooms in large clusters on one-foot stems
<i>Allium giganteum</i> Giant Allium	P	X			Fall	Late Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . While common in the trade, not recommended for the South . They are not persistent in the garden . Softball size blooms on 3–5-foot stems
<i>Allium hybrids</i> Ornamental Allium	P	X			Fall	Late Spring- Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Millenium . Pink Planet . Medusa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Small mounding/clumping foliage, almost grass like . Blooms on short stems covering the mound . Bred for excellent performance in the landscape

Bulbs for the Garden

Scientific Name Common Name	A P TP	Light Needs			Planting Time	Bloom Time	Cultivars	Comments
		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Globemaster, while common in the trade, isn't suited for most of Tennessee.
<i>Allium tuberosum</i> Garlic Chives	P						. Geisha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Can become weedy . Deadhead to prevent seeding . Edible . Attracts pollinators
<i>Alocasia</i> Upright Elephant Ear	A	X	X	X	Spring	Summer Foliage		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Bold tropical foliage . Wide range of size . Dig in fall and store until spring
<i>Anemone canadensis</i> Wind flower	P		X	X	Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Small Daisy like white bloom . Naturalizes in moist areas
<i>Arum italicum</i> Italian Arum	P		X	X	Any	Foliage	. Pictum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Ephemeral-foilage fades in the summer and reemerges in fall . Spreads and can be used as a winter ground . Can be aggressive in ideal conditions . Produces unique red/orange fruit in late summer after foliage fades
<i>Caladium hybrid</i> Caladiums	A	X	X	X	Spring *after soil has warmed	Foliage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Garden Favorites . Gingerland . Miss Muffet . Postman Joyner . Florida Sweetheart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Before frost dig and bring inside . Store bulbs in a cool dry spot that does not freeze . Some can be grown in full sun . Essentially all Caladiums perform well in Tennessee

Bulbs for the Garden

Scientific Name Common Name	A P TP	Light Needs			Planting Time	Bloom Time	Cultivars	Comments
		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Camassia angusta</i> Prairie camas	P	X	X		Fall	Mid Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Native to North America . Blooms lavender to purple . Tolerates a wide range of soils and site conditions from wet, rocky, clay, calcareous
<i>Camassia scilloides</i> Wild hyacinth	P	X	X		Fall	Mid Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Native to Tennessee . Blooms are pale blue to white . Tolerates a wide range of soils and site conditions from wet, rocky, clay, calcareous
<i>Canna spp.</i> Canna	TP	X			Spring	Summer and Foliage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Bengal Tiger . Cannova . Tropicana . Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Hardiness dependent upon cultivar . Can tolerate wet soils . Leaf rollers and Canna Virus should be monitored . Foliage and flower have a tropical aesthetic
<i>Chionodoxa luciliae</i> (<i>Chionodoxa forbesii</i>) Glory-of-the -snow	P	X	X		Fall	Early Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Naturalizing . Light blue flowers . A favorite of voles
<i>Claytonia virginica</i> Spring Beauty	P	X	X		Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Native, naturalizing . White petals with pink streaking . Ephemeral, root is actually a tuber that resembles a small potato and is edible
<i>Colchicum spp.</i> Fall Crocus	P	X	X		Early Fall	Fall		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Plant in early fall . Foliage appears in spring then blooms the following fall

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Scientific Name Common Name	A P TP	Light Needs			Planting Time	Bloom Time	Cultivars	Comments
		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Colocasia spp.</i> Elephant's Ears	TP	X	X	X	Spring	Foliage Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Hardier . Illustris . Big Dipper . China Pink . More Tender . Mojito . Thailand Giant . Black Magic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Grown for its colorful tropical large foliage . Dig in fall and store until spring
<i>Convallaria majalis</i> Lily-of-the-Valley	P		X	X	Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . White bell shaped blooms in spring . Fragrant . Tolerant of clay soil, drought resistant . Groundcover, naturalizes . Deer and vole resistant
<i>Crinum bulbispermum (C. longifolium)</i> Hardy Crinum	P	X	X		Spring	Late Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Orange River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . One of the most cold hardy crinums . Can tolerate wet sites, but not submerged in water . Foliage has interest into the fall
<i>Crinum hybrids</i> Crinum	P	X	X		Spring	Various	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Pink Flamingo . Ellen Bosanquet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . One of the most cold hardy crinum hybrids . Dark pink bud, large pink fragrant flowers
<i>Crinum x herbertii</i> Crinum	P	X	X		Spring	Late Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Milk and Wine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . One of the most cold hardy crinums . White blooms with pink to red streaking . Old pass-along plant

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		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Crococsmia</i> spp. Crococsmia	P	X			Spring	Summer	. Lucifer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Requires well drained soil . Plant bulbs in early Spring . Multiplies quickly, divide frequently
<i>Crocus sativus</i> Autumn Crocus Saffron Crocus	P	X	X		Late Summer- Early Fall	Fall		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Requires excellent drainage . Not tolerant of heavy clay soil . A favorite of voles
<i>Crocus tommasinianus</i> Crocus Snow Crocus	P	X			Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . One of the first bulbs to bloom in the spring . Best for naturalization . A favorite of voles
<i>Crocus vernus</i> Dutch Crocus	P	X	X		Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Dutch hybrids have improved qualities with larger more vigorous blooms . Blooms in a range of colors . A favorite of voles . Naturalizes
<i>Dahlia</i> hybrid Dahlia	TP	X	X		Spring	Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Bishops Children Series . Reference Tennessee Dahlia Society for more information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Hardiness is variable . Lift tubers in fall and store through winter . Prefers moist well-drained soil . Bloom quality is best in cooler climates
<i>Erythronium</i> spp. Trout Lily	P		X	X	Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Native wildflower . Spring ephemeral . Natural habitat is moist woods, slopes, stream banks . Foliage also adds interest

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		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Corms can be found online, but may be more easily sourced as an actual plant
<i>Eucomis hybrid</i> Pineapple Lily	TP/P	X	X		Spring	Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Tugela Series (Zones 6-10) . Sparkling Burgundy (Zones 7-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Great for container . Dark burgundy leaf varieties prefer lots of sun . Requires well-drained soil
<i>Fritillaria spp.</i> Fritillaria	P		X	X	Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Not recommended for the South . Bulbs only succeed when very fresh, not persistent in garden
<i>Galanthus spp.</i> Snowdrop	P		X	X	Fall	Winter Early Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Species <i>elwesii</i>, <i>hippolyta</i>, <i>nivalis</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . These three species are cold hardy across the state . Drooping white bell shaped flower
<i>Gladiolus byzantinus</i> Byzantine Gladiolus	P	X			Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Great pass-along plant for southern garden . Blooms mostly marron
<i>Gladiolus hybrids</i> Glads	P	X			Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Blooms in many colors . Plant among other perennials for bursts of color in the summer landscape . May require staking
<i>Gladiolus murielae</i> also known as (<i>Acidanthera bi-color</i>) Abyssinian Lily Peacock Glad	P	X	X		Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . White star shaped bloom with dark purple center . Sword like foliage . Does not tolerate heavy clay soil . Perform best when lifted in winter

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		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Hedychium coronarium</i> Butterfly Ginger Lily	TP	X	X		Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Pass-along plant . Fragrant white flower . Mulch heavily in winter, hardy to Zone 7b . Interesting tropical type foliage . Upright spreading habit
<i>Hippeastrum hybrids</i> Amaryllis	TP	X	X		Spring	Spring-Summer outdoors or Forced indoors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Bulbs can be purchased in fall and bear their first bloom indoors during winter . In spring, move or plant bulb outdoors . Some may be winter hardy when planted six inches deep
<i>Hippeastrum x johnsonii</i> Hardy Amaryllis	P	X	X		Spring	Early Summer	. St. Josephs Lily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Heirloom pass-along plant
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i> Wood Hyacinths Spanish Bluebells	P	X	X	X	Fall	Spring	. Excelsior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Blooms resemble hyacinths but with taller and looser blooms . Naturalizes
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i> Wood Hyacinth English Bluebells	P	X	X	X	Fall			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Blooms are more pendent shaped than <i>H. hispanica</i> . Very fragrant . Naturalizes
<i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i> Hyacinths	P	X			Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Forces well in container . Make sure they are pre-chilled if forcing indoors in late winter
<i>Ipheion uniflorum</i> Spring Starflower	P	X	X		Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Naturalizes

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		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Iris spp.</i> Iris	P	X			Fall	Spring Summer Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many species, refer to UT Extension publication "Plants for the Tennessee Landscape: Perennials W 874-B" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhizomes prefer shallow planting Divide in summer after bloom Do not mulch over rhizomes
<i>Leucojum aestivum</i> Summer Snowflake	P	X	X	X	Fall	Mid-Late Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White drooping bell shaped flower with green dots on the tips of each petal Deer, squirrel and vole resistant Naturalizes, fragrant, goes dormant by summer
<i>Leucojum vernum</i> Spring Snowflake	P	X	X	X	Fall	Early Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally shorter than <i>Leucojum aestivum</i> White drooping bell shaped flower with green dots on the tips of each petal Deer, squirrel and vole resistant Naturalizes, fragrant, goes dormant by summer
<i>Lilium asiatic</i> and hybrids Asiatic Lily	P	X	X		Spring	Early Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blooms in a rainbow of colors Earliest of the <i>Liliums</i> to bloom
<i>Lilium formosanum</i> Formosa Lily	P	X	X		Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable Reseeds

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		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Lilium hybrid</i> Orienpet Lily	P	X	X		Spring	Early Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Black Beauty . Lesotho . Conca d'Or . Fusion . Golden Splendor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Cross between oriental and trumpet . Good performers in the south . Many get tall and may need staking . Many retain the fragrance of oriental
<i>Lilium lancifolium</i> Tiger Lily	P	X	X		Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Reliable . Old favorite pass-along plant
<i>Lilium longiflorum</i> and hybrids Easter Lily	P	X	X		Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Usually forced into bloom near Easter . Can plant outdoors after flowering but not generally successful long term
<i>Lilium orientalis</i> and hybrids Oriental Lily	P	X	X		Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Blooms after Asiatic lily . Fragrant
<i>Lycoris radiata</i> Red Spider Lily Hurricane Lily	P	X	X	X	Spring Fall	Late Summer- Early Fall		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Leaves appear in winter and die back in spring . Blooms appear in late summer without leaves (naked) . Red bloom with long sepals resembling spider legs

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Scientific Name Common Name	A P TP	Light Needs			Planting Time	Bloom Time	Cultivars	Comments
		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Lycoris squamigera</i> Surprise Lily Naked Ladies	P	X	X	X	Spring Fall	Late Summer- Early Fall		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves will appear in winter and die back in spring Blooms appear in late summer without leaves (naked) Bloom light pink Old favorite pass-a-long plant
<i>Muscari spp.</i> Grape Hyacinth	P	X	X		Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blooms are purple grape like clusters, fragrant Strap like foliage will last for several weeks after the blooms finish Naturalizes
<i>Narcissus spp.</i> Daffodil	P	X	X		Fall	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference Tennessee Daffodil Society for species and cultivars. Beware of the popular form King Alfred which is not well suited for the South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bloom times range from February to May Deer, squirrel and vole resistant Many naturalize Paperwhites are best forced indoors and not persistent when planted outdoors
<i>Scilla siberica</i> Siberian Squill	P	X	X		Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naturalizes
<i>Tulipa batalinii</i> Tulip	P	X			Fall	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longevity is cultivar dependent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flower is generally smaller than tulip hybrids Deer, squirrel and vole favorite Likes well-drained soil Suitable for rock garden Bulb can be planted 1-3 inches apart for mass plantings

Bulbs for the Garden

Scientific Name Common Name	A P TP	Light Needs			Planting Time	Bloom Time	Cultivars	Comments
		Sun	Part Sun	Shade				
<i>Tulipa clusiana</i> Lady Tulip	P	X			Fall	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longevity is cultivar dependent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flower is generally smaller than tulip hybrids Deer, squirrel and vole favorite Likes well-drained soil Bulb can be planted 1-3 inches apart for mass plantings Perennializes better in cooler settings
<i>Tulipa hybrid</i> Tulip	A	X			Fall	Spring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most do not return and best treated as annuals Deer, squirrel and vole favorite Likes well-drained soil Does well in containers, and can easily be forced indoors
<i>Xanthosoma</i> Elephant Ear	TP	X	X	X	Spring	Foliage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lime Zinger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grown for its colorful tropical large foliage Dig in fall and store until spring
<i>Zantedeschia spp.</i> Calla Lily	TP		X	X	Spring	Late Spring- Early Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most do not like heat of summer May start blooming again in the fall Thrive in moist site
<i>Zephyranthes candida</i> Rain Lily	P	X	X		Spring	Summer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blooms in pink and white Water initiates flower production Naturalizes



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