

Janet B. Carson
Extension Horticulture Specialist
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When you say bulbs, most people think of tulips and daffodils, flowers that bloom in the spring. And while we collectively call all plants that grow from an underground storage organ bulbs, many are actually corms, tubers or rhizomes instead of true bulbs, but for ease of understanding, let's just call them bulbs. Aside from the common spring bulbs, there is a whole other group of bulbs that shine in the summer—the summer bulbs can be just as easy to grow as daffodils and give you loads of color in foliage and/or flowers, and will actually bloom longer than their spring counterparts.

There are summer bulbs for sun and shade. Two of the most popular shade loving bulbs are caladiums and elephant ears. Caladiums are annuals and must be replanted each year, or they can be lifted and stored for the winter before a killing frost. Some caladium bulbs will do well in full sun, but I think there are so many sun-loving options that I relegate this bulb to the shade or partial shade areas of the garden. If you can still find the loose bulbs now, you can plant them. They will be up almost instantly in warm soils, since they are heat lovers. Never plant caladium bulbs in cold soil or they will be greatly delayed in their growth cycle. If you can't find the bulbs, you can find caladium plants that are already growing in a pot. The foliage can come in shades of white, pink or red with many different leaf patterns. If you have heavy shade, choose the light pink or white varieties to brighten things up.

Most elephant ears are winter hardy and should come back year after year, however if you are investing in some of the fancy and expensive forms, for safety's sake you may want to lift and store for the winter. Elephant ears is the common name for a variety of plants including alocasia, colocasia and xanthosoma. Regardless of what you call them, most of them get large, although dwarf ones are available. The leaf color can vary from the common green elephant ear to black ones (Black Magic) to lime green (Lime Zinger) to mottled green and purple (Mojito) with many other options. Use elephant ears to add a bold, tropical look to the landscape in borders, mass plantings or in containers. While they will grow ok in pots, they do much better and get larger if planted in the ground. They do best with morning sun or filtered sun and afternoon shade. Provide copious water and fertilizer as the plants grow, especially if you are growing them in containers, as they are heavy feeders.

Another group of bulbs which are prized for their foliage as well as their flowers are canna lilies. These plants do best in full sun, but do like water and nutrition. Flower colors can range from pink, red, yellow and orange, while foliage can be solid green, red, or yellow and green striped (Bengal Tiger) or multi-colored stripe (Tropicana). There are tall varieties getting 6 feet tall or higher, but dwarf introductions can be in the 3 foot range. They multiply quickly, so consider dividing them every few years to improve their blooming.

The showstoppers in the garden right now are lilies in all colors and forms. The Asiatic lilies are very easy to grow, along with the orange and black spotted tiger lilies, and the large dramatic oriental lilies which includes the stargazer lily. Plant lilies in a well-drained site in full sun and enjoy their magnificent blooms annually. For the taller

varieties, perennial stakes will help to keep them upright. The foliage can be cut back when it begins to turn yellow and starts the die-back process.

Gladiolus bulbs are great cut flowers. Outside in the garden they too would benefit from a perennial stake to hold them upright. Many gardeners plant a row of these next to their vegetable garden and use them indoors all summer long. Cut just the flower stalk when the first bloom begins to open and they can easily last two weeks or more inside. Leave the foliage behind to generate food so the bulbs will come back next year.

Don't overlook members of the amaryllis family for summer and fall enjoyment. Lycoris is the Latin name for a group of bulbs often referred to as surprise lilies or naked ladies. *Lycoris squamigera* (Naked Ladies) begins its amaryllis-like strap-shaped leaves in late spring. The foliage grows for 8-10 weeks then disappears. 6-8 weeks later the naked stems pop up with beautiful pink trumpet-shaped blooms. The red spider-like surprise lily (*Lycoris radiata*) keeps its foliage all winter. It dies back in the spring and the plants pop up with their naked stems with red blooms in late summer through early fall. While these are the most common, there are yellow, orange and white blooming lycoris as well.

The above listed bulbs are just a sprinkling of summer bulbs, there are a wide range of others to choose from. Do your homework when planning your garden. Make sure you have something blooming in all seasons, and adding some of these low care summer-blooming bulbs into your summer-time mix will give you plenty of color.