

Designing Spring Flower Beds



- Spring gardens have beauty and mystic all their own. Why this special magic?



- Perhaps it is emerging from the long, dreary winter makes flowers exceptionally welcome.



- Perhaps it is because the flowers change so quickly from day to day as spring arrives.



- It is hard not to be delighted by those first spring blossoms. In a sense, spring gardens are like the resurrection of the earth after it has been asleep for the winter.

- Whatever the reason these gardens look so good, following these ideas can help you create a little spring magic of your own in your garden.

- These ideas come from years of study, of trial and error and of consistent looking for and finding the right way to grow plants for spectacular spring gardens.

- There are still many gardeners who do not understand. They persist waiting until spring in hopes of planting a beautiful spring garden.

- Years of experience have taught us that it does not work. The bulbs must be in the ground over the winter so they can chill.

- Waiting until the soil dries out before planting pansies and other spring flowers means that they start so late that by the time they become established, it is almost time to take them out.

- Fall planting lets them establish a good root system so they are ready to burst into color when winter snows finally disappear.

- Make the mistake of leaving them in the ground and Mother Nature soon lets you know that these cool season flowers are not flowers that are going to thrive in the blistering heat of Utah's summer.

- Spring flower gardens in Utah require another approach. Horticulturally it requires adding many other flowers, trees and shrubs to the mix to get the desired results for the spring gardens

- The reality is that the bulbs look bad for much longer than they look good.

- Although bulbs are truly spectacular flowers, they cannot sustain the garden for the entire season.

- It is a fact that most spring bulbs are outstanding for a week, nice for two weeks and tolerable for three weeks.

- They are then nothing more than dead petals, gangling flower stems and long leaves that eventually turn brown and die.

- The salvation of the spring garden is the other plants we grow there.

- These are a diverse group.
- Some are winter annuals
- Some are biennials that take two years to complete their life cycle
- Some are spring blooming perennials that keep coming back.

- All share are able to survive the winter and grow in early spring. They burst forth with brilliant color to paint an exquisite spring garden.

- The secret of a beautiful spring garden is to get the plants well established in the fall. Gardeners ask, “Why take out those perfectly good flowers before they are killed by the frost?”

- Many people have a hard time have a hard time taking out flowers that are blooming perfectly well. They want to let them continue to struggle to grow until the frost finally destroys them.

- Long experience teaches that there is “a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which was planted.” (Ecclesiastes 3:2)

- Unless the spring garden is planted in a timely manner in the fall, it will never shine in the spring. Horticultural necessity dictates we plant the spring garden in the fall, not in the winter or spring.

- Experienced gardeners know that plantings done this fall are the foundation for the early season color that is so welcome after a long and dreary winter.

- Knowing how and what to plant will make the difference between a few days of color or a garden that blooms from snow melt to the time the summer annuals are planted.

- Few, if any, gardeners will argue those early spring blossoms, whatever they are, are the most noticed and most welcome blossoms of the entire year.

- Orchestrating spring blooms requires planning. Our normal vegetation in Utah is simply not going to burst into beautiful colors as the snow melts in the spring.

- Designing spring flower displays takes patience and skill. Choosing the best plants and planting them at the best time provides proven spring flower bed that look good from the time snow melts until you replace them with summer annuals.

- When most gardeners are winding down for the season and waiting for the plants to die of frost, some are waiting and planning for the promises of spring.

- As ironic as it might seem, spring gardens are created in the fall. The beautiful displays of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and other resplendent bulbs are only possible with adequate planning and planting in the fall.

- Anticipate fall planting dates when the luster starts to fade from the summer annuals. Adjust planting dates to local conditions, making certain to plant spring bloomers so they establish a good root system before winter comes.

- This prevents frost heaving; a phenomenon that occurs as repeated freezing and thawing pushes plants out of the ground. Plants that are heaved out by the frost dry out and die because their roots are uncovered.

- Planting the spring garden this fall is the only way to get the spectacular displays to complement tulips and other spring bulbs.

- Establish them in a timely manner and they will reward you with many welcome blossoms after the long dreary winter is finally over.

ORCHESTRATING THE SPRING GARDEN



- These plants are used as spring blooming annuals, biennials, or perennials in Utah.

Spring Flowering Trees



- Glorious spring gardens depend heavily on flowering trees and shrubs.

- These are very important from a design aspect meaning they add a much needed vertical dimension to the beds but they are also very important from a horticultural dimension.

- Woody plants are in place for several years and in the case of some of the trees for decades.

- Well-chosen woody plants have a very practical value of being in place and blooming dependably in spite of very changeable spring weather.

- All trees flower, but most have small, green flowers that add little to the landscape. For spring gardens, those that have showy blossoms and burst into wave after wave of color beautiful hues and shades of color.

- Selecting these trees carefully gives some showy blossoms for many weeks in our spring gardens.

- As you select woody plants look for those that offer more than just the spring color.

- Other seasons of color are also important but so are strength, tree health and tree form. Flowers are secondary if the tree does not grow well or if you find it unattractive in your landscape.

- Crabapples are one of the small, versatile trees that we use in the gardens. The trees are very cold hardy and grow well through much of the country.

- They come in many shapes, ranging from narrow upright forms to pendulous weeping forms. Selected cultivars are well adapted to many landscape uses needing smaller trees with different shapes or forms.

- Crab apple flowers are single or double, large or small and come in white, pink, red, lavender or combinations of these colors. In addition, the foliage ranges from bright to glossy green to shades of red, bronze and purple. Some varieties even have showy fall color.

- There are no perfect landscape trees and crab apples are no exception. The fruit can be a serious problem because it is so messy so we choose varieties carefully.

- They are also susceptible to diseases, so choose problem-free varieties. Major diseases are scab, fireblight, cedar apple rust and powdery blight. In our area, mildew resistance is the most important feature.

- Flowering stone fruits include cherries, plums and others are used throughout our gardens.

- Flowering cherries come in dozens of different varieties. They range in form from narrow upright columnar shapes to broad, spreading trees, to weeping forms.

- The flowers are single or double and are white, pink or magenta. They make excellent specimen trees if properly cared for.

- When looking for hardier trees, consider ‘Schuberts’ or ‘Canadian Choke Cherry.’ They are very hardy and have the advantage of red to purplish foliage in summer.

- Flowering plums are very showy but have several problems so we do not use them extensively. Some are not reliably hardy even in the warmer areas of northern Utah.

- In addition, they have very thick, upright growth with narrow branch angles that break down easily with snow or heavy winds. Although they are attractive, they are over-used in many landscapes.

- Redbuds appear with brilliant purplish or even white flowers in the spring. They are undemanding and grow best when protected from direct afternoon sun.

- Many different kinds of hawthorns are available. They come in numerous sizes, shapes and colors. They require regular pruning to keep them looking good.

- Choose improved varieties to prevent future problems and use them sparingly, as they are susceptible to insects and diseases.

- Horse chestnut trees are available in both white-flowered and red flowered form.

- Serviceberry is another spring flowering tree with white clustered flowers.

- Dogwood trees are not common here. They will not tolerate alkaline or clay soils. The large, single flowers are very showy.

- Magnolias are also less common but grow in several protected locations. They require well drained and a low pH. Flowers are large and showy and come in white, pink, red and lavender.

Spring Flowering Shrubs



- Spring rebirth is made even more beautiful by magnificent spring flowering shrubs with beautiful splashes of color.

- The earliest shrubs in our gardens are forsythias. These plants face the spring frosts and their flowers are often destroyed because they are so early.

- When not flowering, they are plain shrubs with medium green leaves so we prune them back rather severely.

- They tolerate most soils, like full sun, and grow best with moderate irrigation and fertilization.

- There are three species of forsythia and many varieties including dwarf forms for small gardens.

- Spireas are hardy shrubs that do well in several garden locations. Their form, height and flowering season are variable, but all provide generous quantities of pink, white or reddish flowers.

- Spring flowering varieties are in several of our gardens but there are also many summer and fall blooming spireas.

- Mock oranges are white flowered spring shrubs. They bloom late in the spring and are covered with fragrant blossoms reminiscent of the scent of orange blossoms.

- Plants prefer full sun and tolerate most normal growing conditions. There are several species as well as numerous varieties.

- Several species of honeysuckles are included with our spring gardens. They are valued for their beautiful, fragrant flowers.

Spring flowering trees



Latin Name Common Name Selected Kinds Flower Colors



Aesculus Horse chestnut

"Brioti," "O'Neill" Red, white

Red, "Baumannii" or pink

Amelanchier Serviceberry

Several Species White or pink



Catalpa Catalpa Several Species White



Cercis Redbud Several Species

Magenta



Chionanthus Fringe Tree **Chinese White virginicus**



Cornus Flowering Dogwood

Many White, rose or pink



**species and White, pink or red
cultivars available**

Laburnum Goldchain Tree, Several species Yellow



but most **White, pink** are
soulangiana or **lavender stellata**

**Malus Crabapple, Many
cultivars White, pink or lavender**



species and **White, pink peach,
cherry, cultivars or lavender**



nectarine and others



Pyrus Flowering Pear, Several cultivars White



**Robinia Locust, Several species
White or and cultivars lavender**



Sorbus Mountain Ash, Several species White and cultivars



FORSYTHIA



- *Forsythia intermdia* (Hybrid)

- | SELECTED VARIETIES | COLOR |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| HEIGHT (in feet) | |
| ■ Forsythia intermedia (Hybrid) | |
| ■ Arnold Dwarf (low spreading) | few flowers |
| ■ Beatrix Farrand
6-8 | deep yellow |

Karl Sax

- **deep yellow**
Lynwood Gold
4-6
light yellow **6-8**
- Spectabilis
7-9
deep yellow
- Spring Glory
4-6
pale yellow

- *Forsythia suspensa* (Weeping forsythia)
 - Fortunei golden yellow
- 8-10

- *Forsythia viridissima* (Greenstem forsythia)
 - (no selected varieties)
 - 10-12 greenish yellow

SPIREA



- *Spirea douglasii* (Western Spirea)

- (No selected varieties) pink

4-8

- *Spirea prunifolia* (Bridal Wreath)
 - Plena white clusters
6-8

- *Spirea thunbergii*

- small gray-white

5-6

■ *Spirea trilobata*

3-4

small white

HONEYSUCKLE



■ *Lonicera heckrottii*

■ Gold Flame

12-15

■ centers

coral pink/yellow

■ *Lonicera tatarica*

■ Tartarian

12-15

pink

■ Arnold

8-10

pink

SWEET MOCK ORANGE



- *Philadelphus coronarius*

- Aureus

- 5-6

- white

- *Philadelphus lemoinei* (hybrid)

- Enchantment

white double

5-6

- *Philadelphus lewisii*

- Wild mock orange
variable

pale yellow

- (drought tolerant native

- state flower of

- Idaho

- *Philadelphus purpureomaculatus* (Hybrid)

- Belle Etoile

- 6-8

- White/ purple center

■ *Philadelphus virginialis* (hybrid)

■ Minnesota Snowflake white double

6-8

■ Virgia white double

6-8

■ Natchez white single

6-8

■ Glacier white double

3-4

■ Dwarf Minnesota white double


2-3

■ snowflake

Possible charts



**annuals, biennials or perennials
that we grow in our gardens here
at Temple Square**

The bottom right portion of the slide features several overlapping, wavy, light blue lines that create a sense of movement and depth against the dark blue background.

Perennials Flowers and their Colors



