

Multi-season blooming bulbs

By Grace C. Lockwood

The show of bulbs does not have to end with the tulips and daffodils of May. There are late spring and early summer bulbs that fill the gap between the spring bulbs and summer perennials.

Alliums or ornamental onions come in all sizes from the tiny Allium molly to the 4' Allium giganteum. With a couple of exceptions, they require full sun and well drained soil. They are carefree plants well known for their reputation of repelling insect pests.

The larger varieties include Allium aflatunense, 3' tall with violet-purple grapefruit-sized flower head; and A. christophii, only 2-1/2' tall with giant balls of purple starry flowers blooming in June.

Some tiny alliums are A. cowani, a sweet scented white flower blooming in June and A. pulchellum album, another white one blooming in July/August; A. caeruleum with lovely cornflower blue flowers in June/July; and A. oreophilum zwanenburg, only 4" tall with deep rose-pink flowers. Allium tri-



GARDEN GRACES

quetrum and ursinum, both white, grow in partial shade as well.

Camassia is a North American native whose bulb was once used as a food source. It grows to 2-3' tall and bears spikes of blue or white starry flowers in early June. It is excellent for mass planting to create a "river" of blue in the garden. Tritelia (Brodiaea) is a relatively rare July blooming bulb carrying umbels of deep blue tubular flowers. Plant it in a sunny location where the bulbs can dry out in late summer.

If planted early enough late summer, these bulbs will bloom the first fall and every fall afterwards. Colchicum produces clusters of large chalice shaped

blooms in shades of lilac, purple, pinks and white. The double forms resemble small waterlilies. However, they produce a large clump of leaves in the spring and summer which must be left to mature and get rather messy.

Be sure to plant where you don't mind the leaves flopping about or where they can be hidden. The autumn crocus in shades of blue and lilac and the yellow Sternbergia look just like their spring counterparts but bloom in the early fall. They all like a sunny location and well drained soil.

With careful planning, bulbs can provide garden blooms from early spring through to fall.

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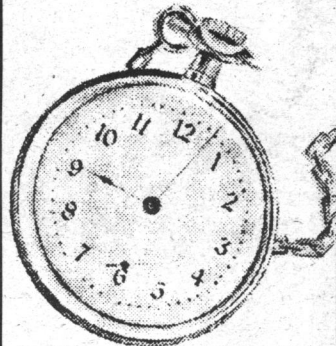
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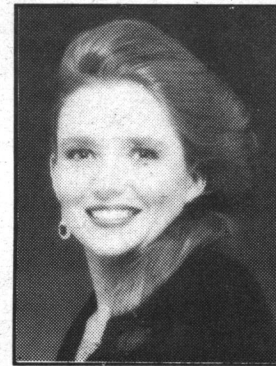
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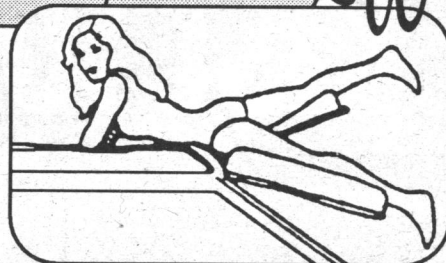
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