



# GREEN TIPS

Department of Horticulture - Michigan State University

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## SELECTING CULTIVARS

Many bulbs are available in several cultivars. *Anemone blanda*, for example, is commonly sold as 'Blue Star', 'Radar' (a pink variety) and 'White Splendour'. Horticultural varieties may differ not only in color, but also height, flower form, fragrance and time of bloom. Check the commercial descriptions of named varieties to be sure the plants fit your requirements. Some species of bulbs have an unusually large number of cultivars that have the same general origin but differ greatly because of extensive breeding and selection. In these cases, cultivars, with similar characteristics are grouped in divisions or classes. Daffodils, dahlias, tuberous begonias and tulips are often described this way. Recognizing the similarities and differences between hybrid varieties can add to the pleasure of growing bulbs.

### Divisions of Tulips

Tulip hybrids are classified into divisions based on time bloom and type of flower. Species tulips are not included in the following divisions. For information on species, see the hardy bulb selection chart.

1. **Early flowering** - Single early: large, fragrant flowers on 12- to 18-inch stems.

2. **Midseason flowering** -

Mendel: single flowers on 20-inch stems.

Triumph: single flowers on 20-inch stems.

Darwin hybrids: single blooms on stem up to 30 inches tall.

3. **Late flowering** -

Single late: oval blooms on 22- to 30-inch stems; includes Darwin and cottage tulips.

Lily-flowered: pointed reflexed petals on 22-inch stems.

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Parrot: flat, informal flowers with ruffled petals on 22-inch stems.

Rembrandt: similar to Darwin but red, white or yellow flowers are marked with stripes or spots.

Fringed: fringed, short blooms on 18- to 20-inch stems.

Double late: very full, double, peony-like flowers on 18- to 24-inch stems.

## **DIVISIONS OF DAFFODILS**

Daffodils are grouped by the American Daffodil Society on the basis of flower form. In a daffodil flower, the center part, in which may be a long tube or a short disk, is called the trumpet or cup. The circle of petals surrounding the cup is the perianth.

1. Trumpet: one flower per stem, with the trumpet as long as or longer than the perianth segments.
2. Long-cupped: one flower per stem, with the cup more than one-third but not quite as long as the perianth segments.
3. Short-cupped: one flower per stem, with the cup one-third or less the length of the perianth segments. A very short cup is called an “eye”.
4. Double: one to several flowers per stem.
5. Triandrus hybrids: small, fragrant, pendant flowers in clusters on a stem, usually late blooming.
6. Cyclamineus hybrids: long, slender trumpet with reflexed perianth; one per 5- to 10-inch stem; early blooming.
7. Jonquilla hybrids: several small, fragrant flowers per stem; tall rush-like foliage.
8. Tazetta hybrids: clusters of fragrant flowers; not all varieties are hardy in the North.
9. Poeticus hybrids: one fragrant flower per stem, with white perianth and red-rimmed eye.
10. Species daffodils: original parents of the hybrids; see the hardy bulb selection chart for more information.
11. Split-corona: cup is split for at least one-third of its length.

## CLASSES OF DAHLIAS

Like all members of the daisy family; dahlia flowers are inflorescences composed of hundreds of individual flowers. Each petal is really a single ray flower, and the central yellow disk is made up of many disk flowers. The American Dahlia Society recognizes 14 classes of dahlias based on flower form.

In addition, growers further divide those classes by flower size, from AA (over 1 inches in diameter) to P (less than 2 inches).

1. Single: single row of flat petals around the central disk. Plants not over 18 inches tall are called “mignon dahlias”.
2. Orchis-flowering: single row of more or less tubular petals around the disk.
3. Anemone: one or more rows of flat petals around a dense group of colored, elongated disk florets.
4. Collarette: one row of flat petals around the disk plus an inner, shorter, contrasting set of irregular petals.
5. Peony: two to five rows of petals of any shape around a flat or a covered disk.
6. Star: very similar to peony type but with pointed petals.
7. Incurved cactus: fully double flowers with petals rolled for their full length and curving toward the center of the flower.
8. Straight cactus: fully double flowers with straight or nearly straight petals rolled for half their length.
9. Semi-cactus: fully double flowers with petals flat near the base, with less than half of the petals rolled.
10. Formal decorative: fully double flowers with flat petals that are evenly and regularly arranged.
11. Informal decorative: fully double flowers with flat or slightly rolled petals that are irregularly arranged.
12. Ball: fully double ball-shaped flowers over 4 inches across, with compact, blunt petals.

13. Miniature: any flower less than 4 inches across. Flower form can be any of the 12 types given above.

14. Pompon: fully double ball-shaped flowers less than 2 inches across.

## **FLOWER FORMS OF TUBEROUS BEGONIA**

Several flower forms can appear on the same plant, but under good conditions, one type should predominate. Separate male and female flowers occur on the same plant as well. Female flowers are small and may produce seeds; male flowers are large and showy. Of all the types listed below, most are fully double flowers.

1. Single: single flowers with flat petals.
2. Camellia-flowered: camellia-like rosette of petals up to 6 inches across.
3. Fimbriata or carnation-flowered: carnation-like flowers up to 5 inches across with fringed petals.
4. Crispa marginata: single or double flowers with a frilled contrasting edge.
5. Multiflora: compact and bushy plants with many single or double 2- to 3-inch flowers; very good for bedding.
6. Pendula: trailing stems with as many single or double flowers; excellent for hanging baskets.
7. Picotee or lace: similar to camellia-flowered but edged with contrasting color.
8. Rosiflora: flowers up to 5 inches across with raised center like a half-open rosebud.
9. Marmorata: camellia-flowered blooms, spotted with white.

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