

Don't worry Spring will be back soon!

Friday, 20 November 2009

There is still plenty of time to plant bulbs up until the end of November. True, we mostly think of bulbs in October but studies have shown they can be planted as late as January and still give a great display in Spring, even if a little later. This will only be true in the first year as the bulbs will naturalize and catch up during their dormant period, coming up at the right time in the second season. If you are a bit late thinking about buying bulbs the main risk is that you will miss them in the shops as garden centres will sell out.

Now is the time to pot up fragrant Hyacinths to brighten up the house as early as January. If you put them into a dark, warm

cupboard they will race ahead and give their colours and scent to your conservatory or kitchen windowsill when you bring them

out after Christmas. They offer a range

of colours from white through all the shades of pink to dark blues. Do be careful handling them

if you have sensitive skin.

Hyacinths can produce adverse reactions but simply wearing gloves should prevent any problems.

Another unsung bulb hero is Anemone Blanda. Their only special planting requirement is to

be soaked in water for several hours before planting. They are a great way of providing

ground cover under-planting in shady spots. You can combine them with things like ferns and

hellebores to produce a natural 'woodland' look. Alliums are another great option that will flower

in early summer rather than spring. Their purple pom-poms are like enormous chive flowers of tennis ball size, and they

will also continue on to give added value as attractive seed heads.

The general rules for planting bulbs are really quite universal. All you need to do is plant them

at three times the depth of their own size. If you want to produce a natural look, just take

a handful of bulbs and throw them roughly where you want the clump to emerge, then plant them where they land.

Have fun, get your knee pads on and get your bulbs in now!