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## the cutting patch in spring

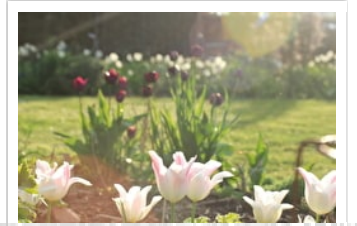
COURSES & EVENTS

Posted in *All posts* on 20th May 2013

SALE

This has, by and large, been a pretty chilly spring. Add to that wild, windy and wet at the moment - not the ideal conditions for the cutting patch in spring! So I thought that making a list of the plants that have really come through for me despite the horrible weather, (even if a few weeks later than normal), would form a useful go-to compilation of hardy toughies that are definitely tried and true.

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ADVICE



These plants have been afforded no protection in an exposed garden site with no cossetting at all, so they are survivors!

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It is no surprise that spring bulbs tend to make the prettiest cut flowers this time of year. I have found that in a cutting patch it works best to plant them around the edges of the beds to avoid the bulbs getting all tangled up in the roots of the annuals later on, and damaged when the annuals are then dug up at the end of the growing season.

The real star performers for me have been the pale scented narcissi, varieties like Thalia, Sir Winston Churchill, *Silver Chimes*, *Geranium* and *Pheasant Eye*. They have the added bonus of smelling lovely too, without the sometimes over- powering scent of the Paperwhites. I have planted them in swathes throughout the garden not just in the cutting patch.



I have underplanted the narcissi this year with grape hyacinths ( *Muscari*) and the cream and blue look great together and the small narcissi and tiny hyacinths are perfect for little posies as gifts or in little glass vases and jars around the house.



Tulips are the other mainstay of blooms this time of year, and in the awful weather some have fared better than others. I have to confess, I am a lazy gardener with minimal storage space and do not lift my tulips after they have gone over. So I never quite know what will have survived year to year, and add some bulbs each November as a precaution. I have also discovered that in my garden anyway, tulips in pots do not return happily.

I always feel slightly miffed with tulips for being so fussy (and horrors of midnight there's also tulip blight to worry about!), when my lovely daffs and alliums troop on year after year, but then their outrageously elegant silken blooms begin to unfurl in April and all is forgiven once more. I have a weakness for Tulipa 'Mount Tacoma' and buy bulbs each year, treating it like an annual. It is a luxury, and I don't have many, but they are so breathtaking.



The two varieties that have returned best in my borders are [Tulipa 'Spring Green'](#) and 'Queen of the Night', whereas the peony, parrot and ballerina varieties have been much more haphazard. If you grow any tulips that return happily for you, do leave a comment, I'd love to try them. Sarah recommends the viridiflora varieties - with the green flashes on the petals - and certainly my cream and green 'Spring Green' tulips bear that out.



If you want to see some fabulous tulip plantings with exciting new varieties and combinations, do visit [Perch Hill in the Spring](#) - I did this year and particularly loved the way the tulips were grown interspersed with salad leaves, with beautiful colour combinations resulting. A sort of glammed up cottage garden approach I suppose.



The garden at [Ulting Wick in Essex](#), also has really spectacular tulip displays and has a Spring open day that I hope to get to next year. The viridiflora tulips, (with the green flash like 'Spring Green'), not only seem to be fairly reliably perennial but also look fabulous from bud to the drop of last petal and look so elegant in bouquets and arrangement with other spring flowers. The other perennial plant that has been a fantastic trouper over the last few years is the [anemone coronaria](#)- bold and beautiful in the garden and the vase. They are dramatic on their own, but mix well with other flowers and foliage in the vase as well - I really love them!



I am particularly smitten with the single form of the Anemone de Caan series - just soak the odd, knobby little corms before planting in the autumn for plenty of lime green, curly foliage and stunning flowers for many weeks at a stretch over the spring and summer. The more you snip the flowers, the more seem to bounce back in a cut and come again fashion. They go on producing blooms long after the daffs and tulips have disappeared and I think they are considerable bang for your bucks.

Finally, an honourable mention to the Euphorbias - many sending out shoots of deliciously tangy looking lime coloured florets and providing fantastic foliage this time of year. I once sowed a packet of [Euphorbia oblongata](#) around the edges of my cutting patch and although the plants are mean't to be a short-lived perennial, mine are returning well and self seeding like mad, so I will never have to buy more. They really do set off flowers in a bouquet beautifully - just remember to sear the stems and wear gloves when picking as the milky sap is toxic and can sting.



If you are growing any other spring flowers which cut well, and have managed to flourish in our less than glorious spring weather this year, please share in the comments section, it would be great to add some more flowers to the list.

Happy gardening and thanks for reading.

*Behinda*

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