



TULPIPS

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TULIPS

beautiful varieties for home and garden





Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
THE HISTORY OF TULIPS	12
CLASSIC	20
OPULENT	68
MOSAIC	94
WHIMSICAL	143
PROPAGATION AND CARE	168
Glossary	198
Index	208
Tulip Directory	224
Acknowledgments	240



THE HISTORY OF TULIPS

IN 1735, THE SWEDISH BOTANIST, PHYSICIAN AND ZOOLOGIST CARL LINNAEUS INTRODUCED A FORMAL SYSTEM OF BINOMIAL NOMENCLATURE WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO GIVE ALL LIVING THINGS A UNIQUE SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION. PLANTS HAD BEEN DESCRIBED AND CATALOGUED PREVIOUSLY, BUT THIS UNIVERSAL SYSTEM WOULD ENSURE A CONSISTENT REFERENCE.

However, unlike many other plants known to Linnaeus, tulips were something of a mystery. There were no ancient references to the tulip in Europe. No observations from Greek or Roman botanists in their travels; no records of tulips in medieval herbals; indeed, no hint of their existence until the 16th century.

To some degree this lack of information can be explained by the fact that many species tulips – the genetic forebears of our modern cultivars – hail from the east, growing wild in the remote mountain regions of Tien Shan and Pamir-Alai in what is now Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkistan and China. Other species have been observed growing in the Caucasus on the borders of Western Asia and Eastern Europe, and in Iran, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Italy, Greece and Crete.

There are currently more than 300 recorded species tulips. Many were gathered in the 18th and 19th centuries by enthusiastic plant-hunters who believed they had uncovered new species in their original habitat, but the true origins of the more westerly species are now unclear. Contemporary scientific research using DNA sequencing suggests that the real number of tulip species stands at just 76 in total, the rest being naturalized imports, mere variants of their eastern parents.

The travels of the tulip

The tulips journey west began with traders along the Silk Road, a network of trade routes from east to west established during Chinas Han Dynasty (206BC–220CE). Initially devoted to silk, as you might expect from the name, the trade expanded in range and when it was realized that wild tulip bulbs were of value they too entered the trade route, transported to markets such as those in Samarkand and Tashkent in Uzbekistan and onwards from there. By the 12th century the tulip had become a popular motif on ceramic tiles that decorated mosques and palaces across the vast empire of the Seljuk Turks, which spread across great swathes of Asia and west into Anatolia, now Turkey. Later, the flower was adopted as a motif by the Ottoman Turks and was emblazoned on manuscripts, textiles, tiles, gravestones and even armor. Both Mughal and Ottoman rulers created gardens filled with tulips, some from species collected in the course of expanding their respective empires, and the tulip became the symbol of the Ottoman dynasty.

Over the centuries the Turks had become experienced in the business of tulip-breeding, and in the 17th century Istanbul's tulip-growers formed a council to regulate the

Lady Jane

Diminutive Lady Jane is a chameleon in character, though she will take a little time to settle in. The long, pinky-green buds stand erect on wiry stems and mature to reveal delicate flute flowers that fully revert in the sun to form exquisite star-shaped blooms. The wonder of Lady Jane is that the reverses of three petals are a warm rose-pink edged in white that tightly enclose three white petals, but when fully open, all the inner petals are white with the faintest pink blush, so first you have a pink flower and then you have a white one. At the heart of the flower is a yellow basal blotch which frames the green, lemon-tipped pistil and long inky-black stamens. The leaves are thin and arching and great clumps can establish over time. Once settled into position, Lady Jane will spread and multiply via underground stolons and when the sun shines will provide a veritable carpet of starry white flowers.

A cultivated form of *T. clusiana*, Lady Jane was registered by W. van Lierop & Zn. B.V. in 1992. These forms of cultivated species tulips are commonly dubbed "botanical tulips." Lady Jane was given the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit in 2008.

Type Miscellaneous

Flowering Early spring

Aspect Full sun

Soil Fertile, well-drained soil

Planting depth 4in (10cm)

Bulb spacing 3in (7.5cm)

Average height 10in (25cm)

Companion plants *Anemone blanda*

As a cut flower Sweetly pretty

Forcing No

Similar varieties *T. clusiana* Peppermint Stick







Queen of Night

Dark, luscious, glossy and indubitably stylish, Queen of Night is an absolute temptress of a tulip. This simple six-petaled bloom has a beautiful classic line and is an intense shade of aubergine that complements other tulips yet demands attention in the flowerbed and vase. Queen of Night buds a greenish-purple, but when fully open in all her inky glory the color of the petals is the perfect foil for dark red, rusty orange, apricot and copper tulips, but is also very pretty with soft pink, violet and white. The pale creamy-white pistil has a purplish-black cap. As the green leaves are short, the flower heads stand proud of its foliage. In a vase, this tulip droops attractively.

Queen of Night was raised by J.J. Grullemans & Sons, reputedly in 1944. The nursery was beaten to the punch in the quest for a "black" tulip by C. Keur & Sons, who registered the magnificent Black Parrot in 1937. A true black tulip is yet to be cultivated – the search has been on since the bulbs first arrived in Europe in the 16th century – but these dark purple tulips are utterly seductive.

Type Single Late

Flowering Late spring

Aspect Full sun

Soil Fertile, well-drained soil

Planting depth 4–6in (10–15cm)

Bulb spacing 5–6in (13–15cm)

Average height 2ft (60cm)

Companion plants *Tulipa* Rasta Parrot, *T.* Foxy Foxtrot, *T.* La Belle Époque, *T.* Black Parrot, or *Camassia* 'Blue Heaven'

As a cut flower Combine with pink or orange tulips for stunning effect

Forcing No

Similar varieties Black Hero is the same color but a double

THE MOSAIC BEAUTY

The exotic tulip blooms that sparked Tulipmania in the late 16th-century were the product of the tulip mosaic virus, which caused the flowers pigmentation to break with spectacular results but ultimately destroyed the plant. Tulip-breeders have long sought to replicate these most exotic of blooms and have worked assiduously to develop new fancy tulips. The Parrot tulips we prize today were developed in the 1930s; the earlier Parrot cultivars had shorter, weaker stems. Each fancy bloom is a little work of art and a tribute to the mastery of tulip-breeders. Not only are the petals curled, waved, crimped and fringed, they come in colors that thrill the heart. Only in a Parrot tulip would you find green, damson, violet, raspberry, apricot, orange, yellow and scarlet combined with such flair.

These mosaic tulips were immortalized by the Dutch Masters; put Rem's Favorite in a vase and as the petals start to drop you will surely be reminded of a still life from the Golden Age. Plant as many as you can, for otherwise you will be faced with a terrible dilemma – do you enjoy them in situ, or pick them and arrange them in a vase?







Parrot Negrita

Like a 1950s couture ballgown, this magnificent tulip explodes from a slender stem into an expansive skirt of pleated and ruffled petals in a seductively intense shade of purple-red. As the green bud breaks, beetroot flames creep up the bud and damson curls spill from the sides. It develops into a frothy, frilly confection of curled, twisted, raggedy-edged glossy petals. These ripple with color; damson, magenta, violet and aubergine can be seen in the peaks and troughs of each curling petal. As it matures the bloom spreads its shapely petals wide, revealing a pale-violet heart, containing a sculpted green pistil ringed by sulfur-yellow stamens. Mix it with dark purple, pink, orange and copper tulips in the flowerbed.

Parrot Negrita was introduced in 2011 by Holland BolRoy Markt. B.V., a Dutch company which specializes in the introduction of new tulip cultivars to the market.

Type Parrot

Flowering Mid to late spring

Aspect Full sun

Soil Fertile, well-drained soil

Planting depth 7in (17cm)

Bulb spacing 4in (10cm)

Average height 1ft 8in (50cm)

Companion plants Pink, blue, white or chocolate geraniums

As a cut flower A magnificent spectacle

Forcing Yes

Similar varieties Black Parrot is a darker purple and Blue Parrot is violet in hue

Blumex Favorite

Budding a gray-green, Blumex Favorite undergoes a dramatic transformation as the bud matures, for the outer petals are infused with all the tones of the sunset; gray, violet, yellow and red. And, as if all this Technicolor glory were not enough, the reverse of the petals is tightly folded and curled like the fleece of an Astrakhan lamb. This is an absolute showstopper of a tulip! As the petals unfurl they reveal a bold red interior, tipped initially with yellow, orange and green, hues that disappear as the flower fully opens. In a vase Blumex Favorite is the personification of flamboyant drama, and the blooms are blessed with a faint, fruity fragrance.

Planted in the right conditions, this tulip blooms readily. It has sturdy stems, but like all parrot tulips benefits from a sheltered site. On the down side, this is one of those cultivars that does not repeat flower efficiently, and it is best treated as an annual. Blumex Favorite is a sport of Rococo, it was registered by Fa. van Dam in 1992.

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- Type** Parrot
Flowering Late spring
Aspect Full sun
Soil Fertile, well-drained soil
Planting depth 6–8in (15–20cm)
Bulb spacing 6in (15cm)
Average height 1ft 4in–1ft 8in (40–50cm)
Companion plants *Muscari* (grape hyacinth)
As a cut flower Superb
Forcing Difficult
Similar varieties Rococo (see p.100)

