



9th February 2026

Spring into Summer: British Garden Centres' guide to the summer bulbs to plant now

As the first signs of spring emerge and gardens begin to awaken from their winter slumber, there's never been a better time to dream of the sunny days ahead. Imagine your borders ablaze with bright dahlias, statuesque gladioli and fragrant lilies perfuming warm summer evenings. This vision can become reality, and the team at British Garden Centres is encouraging gardeners to seize this crucial early window to plant summer flowering bulbs now.

With soil temperatures beginning to rise and the risk of hard frosts diminishing, the coming weeks present perfect conditions for getting bulbs into the ground, setting the stage for a spectacular summer display from June through September. Here are our top picks of summer bulbs to get into the ground or containers now.

Dahlias remain one of the most popular choices for summer gardens, offering an incredible diversity of flower forms from pompom to dinner plate size. Available in virtually every colour except blue, these Mexican natives bloom prolifically from July until the first frosts.

This season's standout varieties include **Dahlia 'Decora'**, a stunning decorative type producing generous 18cm peach flowers on 70cm stems, and **Dahlia 'Magenta Festival'**, a dramatic cactus variety with impressive 20cm magenta blooms reaching 1 metre tall. For those seeking coordinated colour schemes, the **Dark Dahlia Collection** brings moody sophistication with varieties **Tamburo, Night Butterfly, Rocco, and Edinburgh**, while the **Peach Dahlia Collection** offers warm summer tones featuring **Totally Tangerine, Stolze von Berlin, French Can Can, and Sylvia**.

Gladioli bring dramatic height to borders with their tall, elegant flower spikes that can reach up to 1.5 metres. These stunning plants produce successive blooms along their stems in colours ranging from pure white and soft pastels to deep purples and vibrant reds, making them ideal for creating drama and structure in planting schemes.

Lilies offer both fragrance and sophistication, with varieties including Asiatic, Oriental, and trumpet types. A must have for 2026 is **Lilium 'Chartwell'**, a fragrant burgundy oriental lily that reaches 1 metre tall and produces its



9th February 2026

spectacular blooms from June through July. Their long vase life ensures they're equally spectacular when brought indoors as cut flowers.

Alliums create architectural interest with their distinctive globe shaped flower heads perched atop sturdy stems. These ornamental onions bloom in late spring and early summer in shades of purple, pink, and white, with seed heads remaining attractive well into autumn.

Begonias are the perfect solution for shadier spots in the garden, producing masses of rose like blooms in shades of red, orange, yellow, pink, and white. Both upright and trailing varieties are great for sunny colour, with the latter being particularly valuable for hanging baskets and window boxes where they'll flower continuously throughout summer.

Crocsmia provides a burst of fiery colour in late summer when many other plants are beginning to fade. These easy to grow bulbs produce arching sprays of vibrant red, orange, or yellow flowers that are beloved by pollinators, making them an excellent choice for wildlife friendly gardens.

Cannas bring exotic, tropical flair to British gardens with their large, paddle-shaped leaves and vibrant flower spikes in hot shades of red, orange, yellow, and pink. These statement plants are particularly effective when planted in groups or as focal points in sunny borders.

Nerine extends the flowering season well into autumn when many other bulbs have finished. Nerine bowdenii 'Like a Virgin' produces pure white blooms that are ideal for cutting, bringing fresh elegance to late-season arrangements.

Mixed collections for 2026

For gardeners looking to support local wildlife, the **Bees & Butterflies Collection** offers exceptional value with 35 carefully selected bulbs designed to attract pollinators throughout the summer months. This mix features **Liatris spicata**, **Gladiolus 'Charming Beauty'**, **Anemone 'Sylphide'**, and **Dahlia 'Graceland'**, ensuring a continuous succession of nectar rich blooms that will transform your garden into a haven for beneficial insects.



9th February 2026

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres, said: “We often get customers asking what they can do in their gardens during these months. The key to success with summer bulbs is getting them in the ground while conditions are still cool but improving. This gives them time to establish strong root systems before the heat of summer arrives. Our team are always on hand to advise on the best varieties for your specific garden conditions and help ensure you get stunning results.”

British Garden Centres has a wide selection of summer bulbs available at all garden centre locations and online at www.britishgardencentres.com

ENDS

WORD COUNT: 739

Notes to Editors:

About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK’s largest family-owned garden centre group with 75 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by the Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1990 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018, it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres, allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now, with 75 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 3,200 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres, Woodthorpe Leisure Park, and Woody’s Restaurant & Bar.

Social Media

Facebook: British Garden Centres

Twitter: @BGCentres

Instagram: @BritishGardenCentres

Website: www.britishgardencentres.com

Contact

Cassie King - PR Officer

cking@britishgardencentres.com