

A shimmering blue carpet

Why do they call our most popular lawn grass Kentucky bluegrass? It isn't blue at all.

If you want a true blue lawn, I encourage you to learn from the Europeans and naturalize with bulbs. You will create a blue spectacle in spring that will delight you.

Glory-of-the-snow and scilla are the best bulbs for naturalizing in Dakota lawns. Glory-of-the-snow grows 6 inches tall and is hardy to Zone 3. Scilla, also called Siberian squill, is hardy to Zone 4 and provides an intense display of aquamarine blue petals (see photos). Its close cousin puschkinia is light blue with a blue stripe on each petal.

These are robust bulbs that spread rapidly. They generally prefer sunny sites but may be planted beneath shade trees since the bulb will complete its growth before the tree leaves unfurl in late spring. These bulbs prefer moist sites in spring but tolerate dry summers.

For greatest impact, plant in the hundreds, if not thousands of bulbs. These small bulbs are less expensive than tulips and daffodils, and discounts can be gained when buying in volume.

The idea of planting hundreds of bulbs can be intimidating, but consider renting a core aerator to make holes in the grass. Toss in the bulbs and fill the holes with the loosened soil or add compost.

Keep in mind you need to allow the bulbs to replenish themselves after blooming so they have energy for the following spring's show. This means you will have to delay mowing for a couple weeks in early spring until the bulbs' foliage naturally starts to yellow.

If interested in other colors, consider pink or white shades of Glory-of-the-snow, or try either snow crocus (purple, yellow or white) or snowdrops (white).

You could use species tulips or daffodils, but your lawn will

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look shaggy by the time these bulbs replenish themselves in spring. Most gardeners avoid growing giant crocus bulbs in lawns since they are more costly and said to be more attractive to squirrels. Be cautious when using less vigorous bulbs such as windflower, dwarf iris, and winter aconite in lawns as they can struggle under these less than ideal conditions. *TG*

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