

Veronica - Monarda - Miscanthus - Helenium - Vernonia

When firsts planted this scheme might look sparse, but the vigorous perennials used will quickly develop into substantial clumps. With everything growing a meter or more tall this is a bold scheme, filled with contrasts, best used on a large scale in a situation which needs to have an impact from a distance. In the first year annuals could be planted in the spaces between the permanent plants to fill out the bed.

2 × 1 Veronica 'Inspiration'
1 × 2 Monarda 'Scorpion'
1 × 1 Miscanthus sinensis 'Ghana'
1 × 1 Helenium 'Waltraut'
1 × 2 Vernonia crinita 'Mammuth'

Complementary plants
Tulip 'Gudoshnik', *Doronicum orientale* 'Finesse',
Phuopsis stylosa, *Liatris spicata*, *Sporobolus heterolepis*.



This typical prairie style scheme becomes effective from mid summer onwards. In spring the different perennials make a tapestry of greens and make a perfect setting for a bold tulip display. The Darwinhybrid Group of tulips is vigorous and is one of the few groups of cultivars that can be relied upon to return year on year in a planting scheme. The cultivar ‘Gudoshnik’ has two toned flowers; yellow splashed and streaked in red and orange. No two flowers are the same which introduces a welcome informality not always associated with these highly bred tulips. In the first year after planting these tulips might seem oversized and vulgar, but on their subsequent reappearance in later years their flower size will be considerably reduced and made far more pleasing.

Along with the tulips, *Doronicum orientale* should be planted to partner them. These easy perennials flower in early spring with simple bright yellow daisies held clear above their neat clumps of glossy bright green leaves. They are in scale with the tulips, some 50 cm tall, and add an extra dose of gaiety to a display that will applaud the arrival of a new growing season.

Monarda along with helenium are classic herbaceous border perennials with their origins in the North American prairie. Both plants produce wide mounded clumps of foliage and flower at the height of summer’s excess and call for contrasting vertical elements within any planting schemes they are used in. Here as well as an upright grass I have chosen another indispensable summer border perennial, a veronica, with stiff, narrow, upright flower spikes.

Veronica ‘Inspiration’ is thought to be a hybrid between Veronica and the similar but taller growing Veronicasturm. The white flower spikes reach the same height of the purple flowered monarda and will stand out dramatically against its dense clumps. In a very large bedding scheme it might be worthwhile to add a second cultivar to the scheme for a variation in height and greater impact. Possibly the best of all in this

Doronicum orientale



Tulip ‘Gudoshnik’

group is Veronicasturm ‘Lavandelturm’ with branched flower spikes in a delicate shade of violet blue growing taller to 1.5m. When the flowers of these veronicas fade the spikes become soft brown seed heads that remain as a feature of the scheme through into winter.

Monarda ‘Scorpion’ is less susceptible to mildew infection than many of the older cultivars and bears glowing purple flowers over a long season. Like the veronicas the flowers mature to brown seed heads that play an important part in this scheme’s winter aspect.

Helenium ‘Waltraut’ is usefully low growing selection of these popular daisies. The colour is typical of many with an underlying base tint of dark yellow overlaid with streaks and splashes of orange and red. These darker tints tend to increase in area and intensity as the flowers age to create a warm orange glow. Their colour will set off a vibrant contrast with the purple monardas that some might call a clash, but avoids the scheme become neutral in the large scale setting it is being created for.

No prairie scheme is complete without grasses and

Phuopsis stylosa

