

## **Muscari**



Muscari, also known as Grape hyacinths, are small, spring bulbs which grow bright blue flowers that look like a cross between a bunch of grapes and miniature hyacinths. They look good at the front of a border, naturalised in grass or in shady places such as at the edge of a woodland or under deciduous shrubs.

Muscari attract a wide range of pollinators, including bees, providing them with an early source of pollen and nectar after hibernation. Each grape hyacinth flower looks like it has little beads all strung together up and down the stem of the plant.

Muscari bulbs grow best in moist but well-drained soil or compost. Plant in autumn, and water well. Cut back after flowering to prevent seeds developing. They can spread by seed as well as underground, via bulb offsets.

Grape hyacinths send their leaves up out of the ground in autumn. There may be some variation in colour, depending on which species, but smoky blue is the most common colour.

- *Muscari azureum* – a Turkish variety with typical flowers in a soft sky blue. It is slightly less invasive, and The Royal Horticultural Society has given it its prestigious Award of Garden Merit (AGM)
- *Muscari pallens* – has soft translucent pale blue and white flowers.
- *Muscari armeniacum* – a vigorous species variety, growing to 20cm in height, with grass-like leaves and stems bearing spikes of white-tipped, deep violet-blue, egg-shaped flowers in spring.
- *Muscari armeniacum* 'Blue Spike' – has larger, double-flowered heads and looks good naturalised in grass with other spring bulbs or in containers.