



# Bulb Planting and Care Guide

## Basic Planting Instructions

With little effort, your new flower bulbs will burst into bloom next spring. Nothing can match fall planted bulbs for ease of planting, reliability, adaptability, and durability.

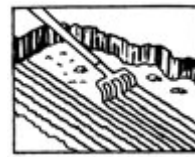
Bulbs will endure more neglect than most other plants. However, they will do best if you keep some of the following important points in mind.

1. You must plant bulbs in well-drained soil. Do not plant bulbs anywhere in your garden where there is poor drainage- they will rot.
2. Plant the bulbs at the proper planting depth making sure that the soil underneath the bulb is worked so that the roots of the bulbs will develop. Remember that for most bulbs the point goes up, and that the recommended planting depth is generally three times the height of the bulb.
3. After planting, remember to water well so that the roots will start to grow.
4. Try to plant each variety you've chosen as a clump. Clumping your bulbs makes planting easier, and will create the effect of a bouquet of flowers blooming.
5. The last thing to remember is the bulb's foliage (leaves). Each bulb needs to restock its food supply using its leaves, so it will flower next spring. **Do not cut the foliage back until it has thoroughly ripened.** When the leaves have turned yellow/brown, you can safely remove them. Ferns and other similar plants help to hide the bulb's foliage as it turns brown later in the growing season.
6. If you are not ready to plant your bulbs when you receive them, open all of the packages for good air circulation. Store them in a cool, dry place with low humidity, away from heat, frost, and strong sunlight, at about 50°F to 70°F. Poor storage conditions may cause bulbs to dry out or become moldy.

## Planting Steps



1. Prepare Bed- Dig out the soil to proper depth. A shovel is quicker and easier than a trowel.



2. Condition Soil- Loosen the soil and add fertilizer. If soil is sandy, mix with peat moss or leaf compost. For clay-based soil, add sand or peat moss.



3. Plant- Place bulbs firmly in soil, pointed end up. Plant bulbs in clusters.



4. Cover and Mulch- Cover the bulbs with soil and water well. Add two or three inches of mulch in cold areas.



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## *Bulb Do's and Don'ts*

**A**lways plant bulbs in borders or beds with good drainage. Planting bulbs in well-drained soil is vital and the most important instruction we can give you.

**D**o not use any strong commercial fertilizers or fresh manure when planting bulbs.

**A**lways cut as little foliage as possible when cutting flowers from your bulbous plants. The leaves and foliage are essential for storing food for next year's blooming.

**D**o not let flowers go to seed. Cut flowers as they fade and remove any seed pods that form. Leave the foliage to keep the bulb strong.

**A**lways let the foliage die back on its own in the garden before trimming it back or digging up the bulbs. Do not trim back healthy green foliage or the bulb will not perform well next year.

**N**ever dry bulbs in the sun, always in the shade in a well-ventilated area.

**A**lways store bulbs in a dry, well-ventilated area to prevent mold or mildew. Do not store them in an air-tight container.

**D**o not grow tulip bulbs year after year in the same place. Sooner or later they may be attacked with a fungus disease called fire blight, which affects both foliage and flowers. Either change the soil or the location; in other words, follow the principle of crop rotation.

**A**lways label the bulbs as you plant them. Use labels that are big enough so that 2-3" of the label is below soil level. Smaller bulbs can get heaved out of the soil during winter freezing and thawing. Labeling prevents you from accidentally digging up bulbs out of season. Do not rely on your memory alone - Labeling is much safer.

## *Specific Variety Instructions*

### **Crocus**

Plant in fall in well-drained, sandy soil in full sun to partial shade. Plant bulbs 2-4" deep and 2-3" apart. For best effect, plant in drifts of 20 or more bulbs. Crocus naturalize well. Crocus can be successfully grown in a lawn for a spring meadow effect. Plant 1-2" deep. Hold off on mowing the lawn in spring until the crocus foliage begins to die back. Hardy in Zones 3-9.

### **Hyacinths**

More fragrant than almost any other garden flower, the delightful hyacinths will reward you with their bold colors. Plant all of your bulbs in a clump, about 4 to 6 inches apart. Hyacinths do best in full sun, and must have a well-drained location.

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### Daffodils/Narcissus

Plant daffodils and narcissus in deep, fertile, well-drained soil in full sun to light shade. Plant 6" apart and 8" deep in groups of 5 or more. Consider planting them under deciduous trees that will not leaf out until after they have bloomed. Water during their growth period. After flowers bloom, let the foliage die back naturally. Once the foliage fades, cut it back. Daffodils can be left undisturbed for years. When transplanting dig and divide the bulbs after the foliage has turned brown and replant at once.

### Dutch Iris

Plant bulbs in the fall 4 inches deep and 3-6 inches apart in well drained average soil in sunny to shaded location. They will boom better when planted in full sun. Allow foliage to ripen throughout summer and then gently remove. For greater impact, plant several bulbs in an area. They do best when allowed to form thick clumps over 3-5 years, after which flowering will diminish. Lift while dormant and remove and replant offsets that from along mature bulbs.

### Bearded Iris

Place the rhizome into the well-prepared soil so that the top of the rhizome is at soil level. Any foliage which may be on the plant should be above the soil line. Make sure the roots are buried well. Fill the hole and tamp the soil down gently. Mulch to retain soil moisture. Water regularly until the roots are well-established. Mulch to protect the plant over winter.

Prune Iris in late summer or early fall when the foliage starts to fall over. With a sharp knife, cut the foliage a few inches above the soil level. Trim the plant into a fan shape. The plant will sprout new leaves in the spring and produce strong healthy flowers.

Carefully dig up the old clumps about every three years. Divide and replant them. Separate the rhizomes with a knife, making sure each division has a strong root section. After separating the section, replant them as soon as possible. Trim off and discard old decayed or corky ends of rhizomes. Replant in loose, well drained soil, in a sunny location.

### Lilies

Plant lilies as soon as they arrive. Take care not to break off any stalks or growth that may be on the bulb. Choose a sunny spot, with light, porous, sandy soil enriched with compost. The ideal site is one where the plants get full sun at the tops and are shaded at the soil level to keep the ground moist. Plant 6-8" deep and 6" apart in clumps of 3 or more bulbs. In the spring, fertilize the bulbs monthly until the plants finish blooming. After flowering, remove only the blooms, NOT the stems or leaves. Allow the foliage to die back naturally. The stalk can be cut back carefully when the foliage has died back completely.

### Daylilies

Plant in fertile, well-drained loam in full sun to light shade. Daylilies will grow in most soil types with adequate drainage. Space 24-36" apart. One of the easiest perennials to grow. Fertilize lightly in spring when plant begins to grow. Water deeply once a week in hot weather. Deadhead daily to keep the plant looking neat. Divide in spring or fall when clumps become overcrowded, usually in 3-4 years. There are hundreds of varieties of daylilies that grown in a range of colors, forms, and sizes. By choosing at least several that bloom at different times, and with different

colors and heights, you can have a colorful garden from late spring to fall.

## Peonies

Plant in deep, well-drained soil enriched with plenty of well-rotted manure or compost in full sun. In warmest areas, shade the plants from intense summer sun. Thrives in areas with long cold winters and mild summers. Space 24-36" apart. Plant the fleshy roots so that the eyes are no more than 1-2" deep. Support plants and their heavy blooms with hoop-type stakes. You may notice ants on the flower buds-it is a symbiotic relationship and does not hurt the plant. Water deeply in periods of drought.

## Tulips

Plant tulips in late fall in humus-rich, sandy, well-drained soil. Grow them where they will get at least 5-6 hours of sun a day; full sun is preferable. Dig the soil to a depth of 8-12" and work in Bulb Booster or other bulb food. Set the bulbs 4-8" deep and 4-8" apart, depending on size and variety. After the ground has frozen in winter, mulch with straw or hay. After flowering, remove the head of the tulip but allow the stem and foliage to die back naturally. Tulips perform best their first year; many gardeners treat them as annuals, discarding the plants after they finish blooming. Extensive testing in recent years has proven that if a slow-release fertilizer is applied, you can expect more than one year of flowers out of most varieties of tulips. Many early-flowering species, as well as Darwin Hybrid Tulips, come back year after year with no effort. Tulips are often planted in rows, but the result is a formal look, much like soldiers lined up in ranks. For a more informal look, plant them in groups of 5-11 or more in natural swathes. The best advice we can give is "plant bouquets". Plant several different varieties of tulips throughout the garden to extend the blooming time.

## Fritillaria Meleagris

In fall, plant in well-drained, alkaline, deep sandy loam amended with organic matter in a sheltered, lightly shaded area. Space 3-4" apart and 3-4" deep. Bulbs and foliage are odorless. Grows 12-18" tall. Flowers early spring.

## Grape Hyacinth/Muscari

Plant in fall in well-drained soil in full sun to light shade 3-4" deep and 3" apart, preferably in clumps of 10-12 bulbs. Do not fertilize. They multiply freely and can be left undisturbed for years. Height depends on variety. Blooms April-May.



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