

# Spring Flowering Bulbs

Bulbs provide years of spring color for your garden. Fall is the prime time for planting of hardy spring flowering bulbs. Most bulbs can be planted until the ground is frozen.

**SOIL PREPARATION:** Preparing the soil is important for bulb planting. Good soil drainage is essential for your bulbs. If you have soil with high clay content, it can be improved by adding organic material such as Bumper Crop, Leaf Gro, or compost material and working it into the soil.

**FERTILIZATION:** Both spring and summer bulbs need phosphorous to encourage root development. The phosphorous needs to be mixed into the soil below where the bulbs will be located so that it can be used by the roots. Mix bone meal or a fertilizer especially formulated for bulbs with the soil in the lower part of the hole. An all purpose soluble fertilizer can be applied monthly from the time you first see shoots until the plants reach full flower.

**LOCATION:** Consider the light requirements of the plant - does it require full sun, partial sun, partial shade, or full shade. Since early spring bulbs bloom before most trees or shrubs leaf out, they can be planted under trees and shrubs.

**DEPTH:** The general rule of thumb for planting spring bulbs is to plant them two to three times as deep as the bulb is tall. Large bulbs, such as tulips or daffodils, should be planted about 8 inches deep while smaller bulbs should be planted 3 to 4 inches deep. Plant the bulb with the nose of the bulb upward and the root plate downward.

**WATERING:** Water the bulbs after planting to help settle the soil in the planting bed and to provide moisture for the bulbs to start rooting. In spring, water if the soil is dry when the flower buds first appear. Make sure to soak the soil - remembering the bulbs that were planted up to 8 inches deep.

**MULCHING:** The bulb bed should be covered with 2 to 3 inches of mulch to help minimize temperature fluctuation and maintain moisture in the bed. Small, early blooming bulbs should not be mulched.

**CUTTING BACK FOLIAGE:** The foliage on larger bulbs, like tulips and daffodils, will take several weeks to die back. After flowering, the plant needs the green leaves to manufacture food that is stored in the bulb for next year's growth. If you cut the foliage too early, you will have smaller blooms and the bulb will gradually decline and die out. When they turn yellow and wither, you can cut them off.

**PESTS:** To deter squirrels, make sure you plant tulips at least 8 inches deep. Squirrels do not like daffodils or hyacinths. Tamp the soil down firmly and remove any bulb skins you might have dropped. You can sprinkle Blood Meal over the bed, which will also fertilize the soil.

Johnson's carries a multitude of spring-flowering bulbs for your garden.

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