

Bulb Forcing

Inducing bulbs to bloom when you want them to, rather than when they normally do, is known as forcing. Most spring-blooming bulbs can be forced into bloom. The most common choices are hyacinths, tulips, narcissus, grape hyacinths, and crocus. Here's how to do it.

CONTAINER: Select plastic, earthenware, or glass pots with drainage holes. When determining the depth of the pot, allow for 2 inches of soil under the bulbs. The tips of the bulbs should be even with the top of the pot. If using clay pots, soak them overnight so they won't draw moisture from the planting medium.

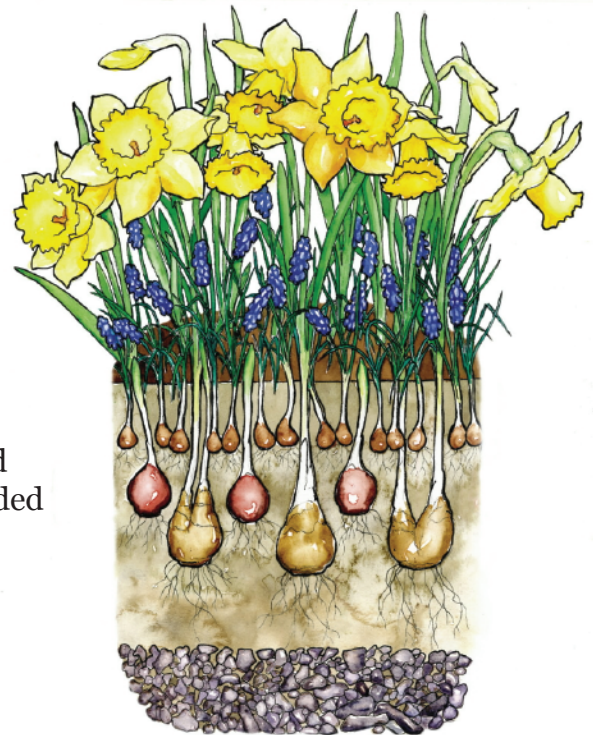
PLANTING: Plant anytime from mid-September to December. Fill each pot loosely with Gardener's Gold Potting Soil and place your bulbs so that the tips are even with the soil. Add water until it drips through the drainage holes. Bulbs contain enough food in them for developing their roots and flowers, so don't fertilize during the forcing process.

COLD PERIOD: All spring-blooming bulbs must have a cold period of at least three months. You can supply this in a variety of ways. Potted bulbs can be stored in a refrigerator or in an unheated garage or cellar. Any location that maintains temperatures between 35° and 50°F is fine. Check periodically to ensure that the soil is moist.

Bulb	Weeks of Cold
Crocus, Daffodil	15
Grape Hyacinth	14-15
Hyacinth	11-14
Tulip	15-17

FORCING BLOOMS: Pots are taken out of their cold place at the completion of the cold period. To avoid shocking the bulbs, it is best to move the bulbs to a cool area of the house with indirect sunlight until the shoots turn green. Then move the bulbs to a window with direct sunlight in an area of the house with temperatures in the 60s. Rotate the pot often to keep the stems growing straight. Remember to keep the soil moist.

In 3-4 weeks, you will be rewarded with beautiful flowers. As the bulbs begin to bloom, move them to an area with indirect sunlight to prolong blooming. After flowering, daffodils can be transplanted into the garden. Bulbs such as tulips and hyacinths are best discarded after forcing.



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