

## FALL BULB PLANTING GUIDE

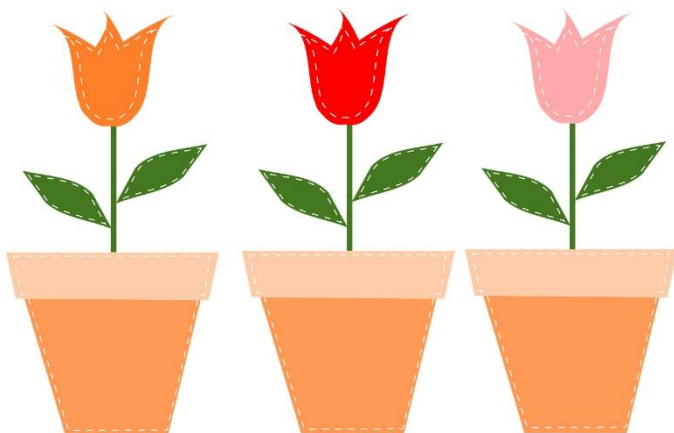


### Plant Now.

For most gardeners, the first sign of spring each year is the earliest flowers of crocus or snowdrops poking up out of the seemingly empty garden. The real magic comes from the fact that there's so little work involved in creating this delight, and what a great way to get us inspired for the coming season! We're going to tell you just how easy it is and the few steps to follow to insure success.

First of all, keep in mind that a bulb actually contains the entire living flower in miniature surrounded by "leaves" of stored food. All that they need to start growing is the cold dormant period that winter provides. Then as the soil warm, up they come. The leaves get busy and provide the food which is stored for next season.

Remember that since each bulb is the entire flower for next year, treat it with care. Keep unplanted bulbs in a cool dry place with good air circulation, and plant them as soon as the soil has begun to cool down, usually in late September or early October. Don't wait too long though or the ground may freeze and abruptly end the planting season for you.



### Enjoy Later.

Since they are self-contained, bulbs will bloom if they are planted virtually anywhere. In general anywhere you can grow annuals or perennials is a good place for bulbs. However, avoid poorly drained locations where water may stand or the bulbs may rot. To insure a good showing in years to come, plant in a location which will get direct sun, especially in early spring. Bulbs will do very well under deciduous trees where they will get sun until the trees leaf out. If planted in an exposed sunny location, such as a southern exposure, **be sure the soil doesn't dry out severely** during the winter and early spring, otherwise the buds may dry up.

Planting is easy. Spread a 2" layer of compost where the bulbs will go and work it deeply into the soil, blending thoroughly. Position the bulbs the recommended depth, replace soil, sprinkle bulb or flower fertilizer (2lb./10'x10' area) and water thoroughly.

When planting your bulbs, keep in mind when they bloom. The species crocus bloom between snowfalls in January, followed by other minor bulbs in February and March. Tulips bloom anywhere from late March or early April all the way through May. The daffodils and hyacinths usually bloom in April. These times are somewhat dependent on the weather and planting depth, but they always follow the same order. Keep in mind that the tulips you see blooming early and getting snowed on in late March are not hurt by the snow.

#### Minor Bulbs

The minor bulbs include snowdrops, glory-of-the-snow, aconite, puschkinia, grape hyacinth and species crocus. Plant all of the 3-4" deep. Remember that since they are so small, they will be most effective if they are planted in groups. They work best in rock gardens or in spots which are very

visible. Don't plant them across the yard or you may miss them completely.

## Crocus

The difference between the species and the giant ones is that the species are smaller and earlier. Plant both crocus about 4" deep. But remember, since one crocus is not showy, plant them in clumps or drifts of 10 or more per location.

## Hyacinths

The next tallest group of bulbs is the lovely hyacinth. Be sure to plant these later bloomers where you will be able to enjoy their marvelous fragrance. They should be planted 6-8" deep and will get 10-12" tall. Planted in a row, such as along a walk, they make a beautiful formal border.

## Tulips\*

The most popular bulb flower is the tulip. Tulips range in size from the 6" tall miniature types to the 24-30" late tulips. Not all tulips bloom at the same time and their season depends on the weather and the depth at which they are planted. In Colorado, tulips should be planted 6-8" deep in an exposed south-facing bed. 8" is best. Be sure to plant at a consistent depth for same time bloom. Shallowly planted tulips may bloom before more deeply planted ones of the same variety.

The earliest bloomers are the "botanical" tulips. The three groups under this heading are the Kaufmanniana, Fosteriana, and Greigii. Kaufmannianas are the earliest and are only about 6-8" tall, but the flowers are huge. The foliage is usually mottled with purple. Fosterianas, sometimes called Emperor tulips, are almost as early but are much taller. Next come the Greigiis, which are again short, have almost corrugated leaves and are very large flowered.

Next in the flowering order come the early tulips. There are both single- and double-flowered early tulips, and they are moderate size. These varieties are very good for forcing. (Ask for our forcing guide.)

## More Tulips

Triumph tulips are crosses between early tulips and Darwin tulips and bloom between the two. They have one outstanding characteristic – their foliage ripens and dries down much faster than most tulips so you can plant annuals in among them quite early. Some also force well.

About the same time as Triumphs the Darwin tulips bloom. These are the most classically shaped tulips. The Darwin hybrids are about 10 days earlier than the regular Darwins (which we classify as late bloomers). Both have sturdy stems which are good for cutting.

Also blooming at the late end of the season are the elegant Lily-flowered tulips and the amazingly huge Parrot tulips. These varieties are quite novel. The large late double tulips are short but showy.

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*\* In Denver a normal spring would see early tulips blooming in late March-mid April, mid-season tulips blooming in mid-April to early May, and late tulips early to mid-May*

## Daffodils

During April you'll begin to see daffodils! Technically daffodils, narcissus and jonquils are different names for the same group of bulbs. Usually we use "daffodil" for the large trumpet-flowered types, and call those with clusters of small flowers "narcissus". Daffodils are probably the hardiest of bulbs and may actually multiply over the years. Plant daffodils 6-8" deep except super-mini and mini varieties, 3-4". The large trumpet daffodils bloom first, followed by the short cupped and doubles. The narcissus with multi-blooms are usually last. However in Denver all daffodils tend to bloom in April.

## Late Bloomers

Let's not forget some of the unusual novelties which bloom later in the season. Allium, Fritillaria (Crown Imperial), Bearded Iris, and lilies which bloom as late as August.

## Some Last Hints

In most gardens, bulbs are more effective in clumps or drifts, not as singles or in rigid lines. They should be included in all perennial beds and rock gardens, and precede the summer annuals which can be tucked in around their ripening foliage. One way to achieve a natural look is to toss bulbs casually and plant them where they fall. For true grandeur, bulbs are stunning in formal beds of one variety.

Each fall and again when leaves emerge a couple of inches in the spring, a well-balanced fertilizer should be applied. This builds up the plant for next year's flowering.

Even more important is never to remove any foliage until it has ripened – turned completely brown. Doing this you may be pleasantly surprised how many years your bulbs will give you pleasure.

