

Spring Flowering Bulbs

planting protocols:

- 1 The best time to plant bulbs in our climate is from early October to mid November. However, even bulbs planted in December are often successful so don't be discouraged if you think it's too late!
- 2 Plant your bulbs with organic bone meal, faster acting bulb food, or try our BONE PLUS product that combines both. Whichever you use, sprinkle some in the planting hole to encourage root growth, the first step to good flower & foliage development. BULB DUST can also be used in the hole: this is an insecticide/fungicide combination that helps to protect bulbs from insect & fungal attack. It can be used when bulbs are lifted for storage at the end of the season as well.
- 3 Planting depth = 3 x width of the bulb.
- 4 Which end of the bulb is up you ask?! The pointed end is up & the rounded end is down...be sure to put the pointed end up! If you can't determine which end is which, then lie the bulb on its side.
- 5 Bulbs are happy in ordinary garden soil as long as it is loose & well-drained. If your soil is soggy or heavy clay, add KEEFER'S SOIL ENERGIZER or LANDSCAPE SOIL, sand or PERLITE until you achieve the right consistency.
- 6 Water bulbs immediately after planting. Our rainfall usually provides enough thereafter, but check any areas under overhangs that may be dry.
- 7 Sun requirements for most bulbs are 4 - 6 hours or more of sun while they are growing & blooming....don't worry about summer conditions for them as they are generally dormant during this period. Take a closer look for spots beneath deciduous trees & shrubs...before their leaves appear in spring it may be possible to enjoy some early blooming tulips, daffodils, crocus, etc.



what does naturalizing mean?

It means that the bulbs fit well into 'natural' looking settings, multiply well underground & don't disappear after only one season of bloom. The setting of these bulbs is important. They need to be planted in areas where they can go through their natural cycle of growth, bloom & gradual drought & dieback of leaves. Look at the labels on the bulb packaging for bulbs that naturalize well.



squirrels vs. bulbs

After planting your bulbs & watering the area, sprinkle BLOOD MEAL on top to deter squirrels. You could also use BULB FOOD in the planting hole instead of bone meal: squirrels are attracted to the smell of bone meal.

We also have a product called CRITTER RIDDER that can be sprinkled around the area.....the name says it all doesn't it?! And if you really don't want to take any chances, you could line the sides & top of the planting hole with chicken wire: in the spring remove the top layer as the blooms begin to emerge.

a recipe for bulbs in containers:

ingredients:

- 1 pot at least 18" deep
- PLANTER BOX MIX & BULB FOOD
- 10 - 12 late spring narcissi or tulips
- 10 - 12 mid spring narcissi or tulips
- 25 early spring bulbs such as crocus
- 1 fibre pak winter pansies

*optional 6-8 hyacinths between middle & top layer

directions:

Start with 6-8" of soil & a sprinkle of bulb food on the bottom. Next add a layer of 5-6 narcissi or tulips, followed by 6" of soil & more bulb food then another layer of 5-6 narcissi or tulips. Add another 6" of soil & then make a top layer of all crocus. Top with more soil & plant your pansies.

shady corners

The only bulbs that do well in deep shade are English bluebells (*Scilla nutans*) & *Cyclamen neapolitanum*. Even with these bulbs though, the more shade they are in the weaker & fewer the flowers will be in successive years. On the bright side, if you've planted early blooming bulbs under deciduous trees & shrubs they should receive enough sun to ripen the leaves & store food for next year's blooms before the trees & shrubs leaf out in mid spring.

bulbs for semi-shady areas:

(semi-shade = 3-4 hours of strong light per day)

ALLIUM MOLY LUTEUM

ALLIUM UNIFOLIUM

ANEMONE BLANDA

CAMASSIA

CYCLAMEN NEAPOLITANUM

ENGLISH BLUEBELLS (*SCILLA NUTANS*)

ERANTHIS (WINTER ACONITE)

FRITILLARIA MELEAGRIS

FRITILLARIA PERSICA

GALANTHUS (SNOWDROPS)

EUCOJUM AESTIVUM (SUMMER SNOWFLAKE)

NARCISSUS SPECIES

PUSCHKINIA

SCILLA SIBERICA

TULIPA SPECIES



Want to try something different? Ask our staff about this year's new arrivals. Or, grow some little bulbs like Rockgarden narcissus, Botanical tulips, or small alliums like *Allium moly lutea*....they'll add another dimension to your rockery garden!

double-decker planting

For an extended blooming season, plant large flowered crocus over early blooming tulips. The crocus will bloom before the tulips & when the tulips come up they will hide the untidy foliage of the finished crocus.

When bulbs bloom has a lot to do with the weather, but generally in our climate

THE **blooming seasons** ARE:

EARLY SPRING: mid february - march

MID SPRING: april - early may

LATE SPRING: mid may - june

SUMMER: june

when Spring has Sprung

1 During the spring growing season bulbs will need a regular supply of water before & after blooming & until the leaves have ripened, or turned yellow.

2 Fertilize with bulb food when the leaves first appear & then again when the bulbs have finished flowering: this latter feeding is very important as the bulbs will be exhausted from blooming & need every bit of food & water you can give them!

when blooms have faded

If you're leaving bulbs in the ground, cut off the entire flower stem only! The leaves must be left on because they are providing the bulb with energy to produce next year's blooms. Fertilize with bulb food and hold back on water. Once the leaves have turned yellow they can be removed.

TIP... Plant annuals to hide yellowing leaves so you're not tempted to cut them back too early.

If you still have the urge to prune those yellow leaves then carefully lift bulbs with a spading fork & place them in a pit in a hidden garden corner. Layer the lifted bulbs in the pit with the leaves exposed & bulbs covered with soil. Sprinkle with bulb food between each layer. Water the area occasionally if it isn't raining enough. When leaves become yellow & dry dig up the bulbs, remove dead foliage, dry them & brush off any soil. Store bulbs in mesh bags or nursery flats in a cool, dry place until it's time to plant again in the fall.



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