

Planting Spring Bulbs

One gardening activity that pays back big dividends is planting spring-blooming bulbs in the fall. Daffodils, crocus, tulips, fragrant hyacinths and spectacular alliums are easy to grow and an afternoon of planting will give you weeks of color in the spring. A few simple rules of thumb apply to planting almost any bulb.

- Most bulbs prefer sunny locations but can be planted even in areas that seem a bit shady in fall as long as the shade comes from trees that will drop their leaves.
- You can buy your bulbs early for best selection, but store them in a cool place until soil temperatures cool. Once overnight temperatures have been in the 50s for a week or so the soil should be about right.
- Bulbs should be planted so the distance from top of the bulb to the soil surface is about 2 to 3 times the height of the bulb. You can "guesstimate" the depth of the planting hole, or use a trowel or other digging tool with measurements on it. If you're planting a lot of bulbs, a bulb auger can save your back. Augers are giant drill bits that can be used with a drill to bore holes in soil quickly.
- The top of bulbs is usually the more pointed end, and this should face up. (Fun fact-tulips, crocus and some other bulbs have "contractile roots" that will pull the bulb to the ideal depth over time. These bulbs can even turn themselves around if you happen to plant them upside down!)
- Water thoroughly after planting; after that, unless the fall is unusually dry, seasonal rainfall should be enough until spring.
- Clean up any dropped bulb parchment or "skins", broken bulb sections, or other planting debris to avoid attracting squirrels to the planting area.

Pests

If voles are a problem in your yard, dig the planting hole 2-3" deeper than required for the bulbs. Place a 2-3" layer of PermaTill on the bottom of the planting hole and set the bulbs directly on the PermaTill. Back fill to completely cover the bulbs with 100% PermaTill. Once the bulbs are covered, use a 50:50 blend of PermaTill and existing soil to fill the planting hole to the soil surface. Bulbs will grow fine in the mixture.

(continued)



NEW GARDEN
LANDSCAPING & NURSERY

newgarden.com
email: info@newgarden.com

New Garden Gazebo
3811 Lawndale Dr.
Greensboro, NC 27455
phone: 336-288-8893

Tulips are wildflowers native to central Asia in the Tien Shan Mountains near the Russian-Chinese border. They spread west and were cultivated in the Ottoman Empire (modern-day Turkey) by 1000 A.D. when the sultans introduced huge beds of tulips to parks and palace gardens.



New Garden Landscaping & Nursery

"Where your imagination takes root"

Planting Spring Bulbs cont.

(cont.)

To deter squirrels, you can place 1/2" wire mesh over your bulbs and pin down with landscape pins. Remove before new growth starts in spring. You can re-use the mesh for years if you get a plastic coated type.

Fertilizing

Bulbs are packed with nutrients and can support one season's growth without fertilizer, but for bigger, brighter blooms, or for naturalizing (planting a large area with bulbs with the expectation that they will continue to grow and spread) an application of slow-release bulb food like Espoma Bulb-Tone is beneficial.

Easy Bulk Planting

If you're looking for the spectacular show that large expanses of naturalized bulbs can put on, try the "drop and cover" method studied by Cornell. ([link: http://hort.cornell.edu/bulb/newsletter/pdfs/26-201107.pdf](http://hort.cornell.edu/bulb/newsletter/pdfs/26-201107.pdf)) This is a quick way to get dozens or even hundreds of bulbs planted without breaking your back. (Use adequate squirrel and vole deterrents with this method). If you find end-of-season deals on bulbs, this is an easy way to get them in the ground quickly! Although the method was tested on tulips, it would likely work on almost any naturalizing spring bulb.

No matter how you use them, from an accent of a few tulips to swaths of naturalized daffodils, spring blooming bulbs are a great way to get low-maintenance color into your spring landscape!



New Garden Landscaping & Nursery

"Where your imagination takes root"