



Successful Blooming Bulbs

Bulbs add so much colorful elegance to a garden bed or container, and are quite easy to grow!

SELECTION AND WHERE TO PLANT:

- **Most varieties do best in sun.** Tulips and hyacinths like at least 3-4 hours or more of sunlight. Daffodils are excellent for part shade, and can be ideal sited under deciduous shade trees.
- For longer tulip bloom, select varieties that are 'mid' and mix them with 'late' varieties of a similar color. This will give you a bloom time that will expand to 4 weeks in your spring garden. Single, late tulips may last better in our winter warm spells.
- **Bulbs show best when planted in masses.** Many bulbs, such as tulips need to be planted closely to get dense color. Remember that some bulbs perennialize, coming back for several years, or naturalize, meaning they reproduce and spread.
- When planting containers, don't put more than 2 layers of bulbs. As bulbs in containers need more water, they can freeze, and this will break bulbs that are overcrowded or planted too closely to the outside of a container in winter. Cover pots on freezing cold nights with frost cloth to protect them.

STORAGE:

- Planting bulbs too soon or storing bulbs in hot conditions can kill the flower inside the bulb. **Tulip, Hyacinth, Dutch iris and Crocus all need cool storage** until soil temperatures are right for planting, and that peak time is usually mid-December in our area. Home refrigerators are usually too cold for bulbs, around 37°. Recommended chilling temperature is 45-55°F for approximately 45 – 60 days. **At NHG, we can do this for you in our unique bulb cooler.**

WHEN TO PLANT:

- All bulbs are highly temperature driven, and therefore **planting timing is critical.** In general, it is best to plant fall bulbs for spring bloom in the Dallas area after October 15th.
- Daffodils, Iris, and other bulbs can be planted almost anytime; typically from late September right until March.
- Tulips are best planted when soil temperatures reach 50° F, between mid-December and the first week of January.
- Ranunculus and Anemones are best planted in January.

HOW TO PLANT:

- Plant in well-drained, amended soils, as clay can freeze and break the bulb. Add organic compost and expanded shale to heavy soils to improve drainage. **Be careful never to over water bulbs.**
- For increased success, most bulbs benefit from a 20 minute soak in a **Seaweed** solution. Dig all holes 3 times the height of the bulb. **If you're in doubt, please ask us for help in-store or online.** Planting depth is all important to bulb success.
- Our **NHG Organic Bulb Food** or **Espoma Bulb-Tone** are good fertilizers to use, especially if bulbs are to be combined with winter color. Avoid using stronger foods in the bulb hole when planting, as it will burn the emerging roots.
- Always water well after planting.
- Add a 1- to 2-inch layer of mulch above the bulb planting area in order to keep the soil temperature even. **Pine Bark Mulch** with its slight acid content is ideal for bulbs.

Should bulb tips begin to appear on a warm day, be certain to give them regular water. Since bulbs naturally respond to temperature, you won't be able to stop them - just enjoy!

SPECIFIC BULB CARE:

- **Daffodils** can tolerate part shade areas. They can be planted from late September until March. unless an unusual warm spell occurs, they will bloom in March, regardless of when planted. **Many varieties will continue to return for 3-4 years.** Feed them after the second year of growth. Divide bulbs after the 4th or 5th year.
- **Paperwhites** bloom outdoors in 5-6 weeks, and they will bloom in the fall (if planted in the fall). The more mature the bulb, the faster they will grow in the garden. Planted in October they will take 6 weeks to bloom; in November 5 weeks, December, 4 weeks, January, 3 weeks.
- **Ranunculus and Anemones** – plant in January. If you plant them too early, they won't bloom. Soak Anemones in water for 30 to 60 minutes before planting.
- **Lycoris** can be planted August through November. The pinks might bloom the first year, reds may take 2 years, and Yellow Lycoris might take up to 3 years before blooming. **Remember to allow the foliage that appears in summer to remain to produce energy for the plant.**

Forcing Bulbs Indoors

GENERAL CARE:

- For quicker bloom, look for a small green tip at the top of the bulb. **Keep in a dimly lit area** until 1" of green growth begins to appear, then move to a brighter area. Plant with bulb ½ covered in well-draining soil or decorative pebbles, or suspend above water with roots pointing down.
- Water sparingly until growth begins to appear. Or, if planting in pebbles, add enough water so just the roots are in the water, and **not the bulb itself.**
- Once growth is under way, begin to water regularly. Do not allow the bulb to rot from over-watering, or, if forced in water, do not allow the roots to go dry.

SPECIFIC BULB CARE:

- **Amaryllis:** Soak bulbs in a **Seaweed** solution 20 minutes prior to planting. Keep in bright light until flowers begin to open; about 5-6 weeks. **Once opening begins, move out of direct sunlight.** Turn pot every few days for even flowering.
- To get Amaryllis to rebloom, cut off the flower and stop watering. When the foliage turns yellow, take it out of the pot, put in burlap and put in the garage. In October, remove dead foliage, plant in container with soil, and 6-7 weeks later it will bloom. Or, to plant outdoors, continue to water in the container after blooming. In February, take out of pot, remove the foliage, and plant in the garden. The amaryllis will bloom in the fall.
- **Hyacinths and Paperwhites:**
Keep **Hyacinths** properly chilled until planting time. Hyacinths forced in water take about 7 weeks to bloom. For bowl plantings, make sure all have a growing tip, so they will all bloom at the same time. Place bulb in special bulb vase or container with loose pebbles that will allow bulb to be suspended above the water. Keep the water about ½" below bulb, changing the water often, and roots will 'reach' for it as they grow. **Most will bloom in about 5-6 weeks;** yellow paperwhites can take up to 8 weeks to bloom. After paperwhites bloom inside, cut off blooms, then plant outside. Once planted, they can tolerate ground temperatures to about 28°F.

Ask us for help anytime in-store or online!