

Fall Planting Guide

Thank you for choosing Flower Power and supporting your local fundraising project. The bulbs you have received were grown and harvested in Holland. Use this guide to get the most from your premium, spring-blooming bulbs. Should you have any questions, please call us at 1-888-833-1486.

Care Upon Arrival

It's best to plant your bulbs as soon as they arrive. The sooner you plant your bulbs, the more time they will have to develop a good root system before they become dormant for the winter.

If you need to delay planting for a few days, open the bags to provide adequate ventilation and store them in a cool, dry and dark place. Bulbs should not be stored close to fruits. Ripening fruits give off ethylene gas, which can harm the developing flowers inside the bulbs.

Soil Preparation

Time spent preparing the soil before planting will help ensure beautiful displays of color next spring and in future years. For best results, improve the soil in the planting hole by adding compost and bulb fertilizer to the removed soil.

Plant bulbs in well-drained soil to prevent them from rotting before they have a chance to flower. If the planting site remains soggy, especially

during the winter and spring, build a raised bed or improve the soil's drainage. To improve the drainage in clay or compacted soil, loosen it with a garden fork and add compost or dampened peat moss. Apply a 3 to 4-inch layer of compost and work it into the top 12 inches of soil before planting.

Planting

Which end is up? That's a good question! Most bulbs, such as daffodils, have a clearly defined, tapered tip that should point up when planted. Some bulbs, such as crocus, may show evidence of old roots or new sprouts. If in doubt, plant irregular-looking bulbs sideways. Their roots and shoots will naturally grow in the right directions!

What's the best tool for planting your bulbs? It depends whether you are planting in large drifts, small groups, or naturalizing individual bulbs in the lawn or landscape. For large groups of bulbs use a spade to remove all the soil in the planting area down to the recommended depth. To plant individual or small groups of bulbs or to plant in tight spaces use a garden trowel or tube-shaped bulb planter.

For greater impact, plant bulbs in informal groups or blocks of color, rather than in straight rows.

Each type of bulb has its own recommended planting depth and

spacing guidelines. Please refer to the individual package labels for specific instructions. Water your bulbs thoroughly after planting and then let Mother Nature take over.

Tips for Success

Water thoroughly after planting and maintain soil moisture during the spring as the bulbs grow foliage and flowers. Regular watering will promote longer-lasting blooms if the spring weather is particularly hot or dry.

Fertilize with a balanced, slow-release granular bulb or flower fertilizer as bulbs begin to emerge in the spring. Following package instructions, sprinkle fertilizer around the plants and gently rake into the soil.

Mulch with a 2-inch-thick layer of organic material to help retain moisture, discourage weeds, and maintain even soil temperatures.

Foliage feeds the bulbs for next year's bloom. Leave it intact until it turns yellow or brown.

Tips for Warmer Climates

Dutch bulbs thrive in areas with cold winters, rainy springs and cool summers. But, with a little special attention, they will grow almost anywhere.

If you live in an area of the country where winters are mild and frosts are rare (USDA Hardiness Zones 10, 9 and 8), you must provide an artificial winter for tulips, daffodils, crocuses, hyacinths, alliums and muscari. These bulbs require a chilling period of at least eight consecutive weeks of temperatures between 35° and 45° F to grow and flower properly.

For best results, begin the chilling period (or artificial winter) as soon as you receive your bulbs. Store the bulbs in the refrigerator in a vented bag. To prevent damage to the developing flowers inside the bulbs, do not store any fruit in the refrigerator during this time unless it's in an airtight container.

After the eight-week cooling period, take the bulbs directly from the refrigerator to your planting spot. An ideal site will have morning sun and some afternoon shade. Avoid hot, dry locations.

Please note that bulbs grown this way should be treated as annuals; they cannot be saved easily for another year.

For more tips on growing bulbs, please refer to the articles at www.dutchgardens.com. Simply click on How-To at the top of any page and then select the topic of your choice.

We wish you a successful gardening season!

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