

Bulbs for Containers

Bulbs are great in containers, hidden by spring, summer and fall annuals you hardly know they're there until suddenly they spring to life one April morning!

CHOOSING YOUR CONTAINER

Good drainage is vital to bulbs, so choose pots with large holes. Terracotta pots are great for spring flowering bulbs because they are porous and allow water through their sides as well as their drainage holes. This lessens the chance of bulb rot during our wet, mild winters. Wooden containers also drain quite well.

SOIL MIXES

A well-drained soil is essential for bulbs. Add either 10% crushed pumice rock or washed sand to our **GARDENWORKS™** Planter Box Mix and you're ready to go!

FERTILIZING

When planting bulbs, be sure to fertilize with **GARDENWORKS™** Bone Meal or Bulb Food at planting time, and, again, just after blooming. Although these products are virtually interchangeable, there is one major difference: since it is organic, bone meal is slower to take effect. As a result, bone meal makes a better over-winter feed, while bulb food supplies a burst of feed in the spring.

CARING FOR YOUR NEW POT OF BULBS

Place your container outside in a sunny location where it will receive natural rain or can be watered. Since most bulbs are much hardier than necessary for our mild winters, there is no need to shelter them. You may apply a light mulch during heavy-frost periods, once the foliage and buds starts to show above the soil. Keep your container evenly moist, and avoid digging near the developing plants.

MOVING THE POT

When in bloom plant containers can be moved to the best site in the garden and if the pot is small enough, can even be brought into the house. After blooming, the pot can be stored out of sight in a garage or shed; or carefully planted over for a spring, summer and fall show. During each re-planting, be extra careful around the developing bulbs.

POTTED BULB DESIGN GUIDE

Planting up your own recipe of colour is always fun! Almost all spring-flowering bulbs can be grown in pots. Choose bulbs that will flower all at once, creating a big colourful display.

SOFT COLOUR SCHEMES

Pastel shades are probably the easiest way to create a soft look. It is nice to break the pastels up with white or cream blooms somewhere in your container. This will give a clean look instead of a washed out one. Another pleasant combination is to choose one colour and use two different shades of it, along with a white or cream to soften it up. Example: Deep-purple, pale-purple and cream.

BRIGHT COLOUR SCHEMES

For a burst of colour choose either three consecutive colours on the colour wheel making sure you pick flowers with intense deep, rich colour.

Consecutive colours are:

red, orange, yellow

orange, yellow, green

yellow, green, blue

green, blue, purple

Or choose complementary colours. These are colours that are opposite on the colour wheel:

purple & yellow,

orange & blue, or red & green

A RECIPE FOR A 3-TIERED POTTED DESIGN FOR BEGINNERS

1. The first tier of 5-7 tall yellow tulips form the backbone of the planter.
2. The second tier of grape hyacinths (*Muscari* spp.) create a soft-looking ring around the container and offer a colour contrast to the tulips.
3. The bottom tier of yellow-centered primulas, hug the pot, mirror the colour of tulips, and conveniently bloom at the same time as the rest of the pot.

IMITATING NATURE'S WAY OF PLANTING

Naturalizing provides a plant with a preferred set of conditions, allowing it to thrive in the same spot year after year. This is quite easy to achieve with bulbs. Naturalizing also refers to the random manner in which bulbs grow in the wild. We have listed a few tips on how to imitate nature so that your bulbs will last forever.

For a convincing drift of daffodils under a large tree, start with about 50 bulbs, you'll find almost the same number of cards in a deck. Play a game of '50 pickup' with the wind and send the cards scattering off, plant a bulb wherever a card lands. Another method is to simply scatter the bulbs themselves, a method suited to small areas.

FOUR SIMPLE STEPS TO PLANTING BULBS

It is always important to plant a bulb properly, particularly when you want the bulb to live there for many years.

1. Prepare a small hole, digging deeper than the required planting depth.
2. Take part of the removed soil, mix it well with rotted compost or manure and then fill the hole with the mixture until you reach the required planting depth.
3. Before placing the bulb in the hole, add a teaspoon of **GARDENWORKS™** bone meal for small bulbs or a tablespoon for large ones, then drop the bulb in.
4. After covering the bulb, water well. This will encourage the growth process right away.

PLANTING BULBS UNDER TREES

It is possible to grow early-flowering bulbs under deciduous trees while the branches are still bare. Good choices include bluebells, daffodils and crocuses. Avoid bulbs such as tulips, anemones, lilies and bearded iris; shade cast from the leaves during the summer, prevents growth in these late flowering bulbs. However, trees compete strongly for soil moisture and nutrients, so be sure to feed and water your bulbs during their growth period.

PLANTING BULBS IN YOUR LAWN

By planting bulbs under your lawn, you can extend flowers from their conventional beds into new territory. When choosing bulbs for planting in the lawn, be certain to pick early-blooming varieties, so that the bulb's leaves will die down before you need to mow your lawn. There are two methods of planting bulbs in the lawn, depending upon the size of the bulb, how many you want to plant and how closely. **SMALL BULBS** (crocus, snow drops and scilla) and single **LARGE BULBS** can be planted in the conventional manner. Dig a hole in your lawn and drop in a little bone meal. Insert your bulb and cover it. The small patch of grass that is uprooted can be reinserted as a "plug." Water in well and get ready for spring. Clumps of large bulbs (daffodils) look wonderful in large lawns, especially when they merge into a woodland or slope. Since large bulbs need to be planted fairly deep and, depending on the variety, prefer a well-cultivated spot, the sod will have to be lifted.

1. Cut a rectangle in the grass with a sharp spade or lawn edging tool.
2. Slide the spade under the grass and roll the turf back.
3. Dig the soil to a depth of about 12".
4. Fill the hole with a mixture of the removed soil and a well-rotted compost or manure.
5. Randomly place the bulbs. Cover with the remaining soil mixture, restoring it to the original level, and water in.
6. Roll the grass back, and water again.

Portions of this information sheet were extracted from "A Landscape of Bulbs", by Heide Kim, originally published in *GardenNotes*, Issue #34, September 1996