

## Naturalizing Bulbs

Bulbs that 'naturalize' are those that, in a nutshell, spread and regenerate naturally throughout an area. Inexpensive, easy and beautiful are three words to associate with them. These 'no-fuss' flowers are especially important if you don't have a lot of time to fiddle about. They have remarkable staying power and will put on a display that will be really something to look at in the years to come.

The trick is to plant them in locations where they can be left alone to naturalize. Don't plant them in annual beds where they can be accidentally dug up, watered when they should be resting or look unsightly when you want to pop in early colour. They are ideal as underplantings under ornamental trees such as Japanese maples, weeping cherries, flowering shrubs and in your lawn! Use early varieties for your lawn though, and be sure to let foliage die down naturally before you lop it off with the mower.

Some fantastic contenders for naturalizing bulbs are:

Bulb	Height	Season
Crocus	VL	Very Early
Scilla	VL	Very Early
Chionodoxa	VL	Very Early
Snowdrops	VL	Very Early
Species Iris	VL	Very Early
Aconites	VL	Very Early
Puschkinias	VL	Very Early
Narcissus 'Tête à Tête'	L	Early
Anemone bl.	VL	Early
Muscari	VL	Early
Fritillarias (most var.)	H	Mid-Season
Alliums (most var.)	L/H	Very Late
Species Tulips	L	Variety Specific



## Forcing Bulbs

Many folks are taking an interest in forcing bulbs either for personal enjoyment or as a unique gift to others for the holidays.

Paperwhites and Hyacinths are some of the more popular forcing bulbs and they need about 4-6 weeks to bloom. Remembrance Day week is a good time to start if you want blooms for Christmas.

To force bulbs, be sure to purchase 'prepared' bulbs. These bulbs have been temperature treated specifically for the forcing process. Place them in a decorative container and do not let water come up any higher than the root zone, even if you are growing them on marbles/stones. Keep them as cool as possible, ideally indoors by a cool window in bright light. Check the water level regularly and check for stretching (in which case they need more light). Note: Forced bulbs tend to bloom only once.



## Checklist

- Well-drained Soil
  - Sand
  - Bonemeal
  - Trowel
  - Kneepad
  - Bulbs!

For an in depth discussion on bulbs, including bulbs for hard to grow areas, pick up a copy of 'Brian Minter's New Gardening Guide' available at Country Garden Ltd.



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# Fall Bulb Guide

Timely hints to help you achieve lasting colour all Spring long!

## The Basics

**Soil:** Not dirt! Soil is a mixture of organic and inorganic materials, microorganisms, nutrients, air and moisture.

**Sand:** Typically refers to fine grained, washed sand from a professional source. Helps to improve soil drainage around bulbs. Sawdust (not cedar!) can also help improve drainage.

**Bulb:** Used to describe a broad group of plants. A true bulb is composed of layers of compressed immature leaves or 'scales' attached to a basal plate (which is actually a squashed stem). Eg: tulips and daffodils.

**Corm:** Often lumped in the 'bulb' category and typically planted and cared for in the same fashion. Corms are the swollen base of a stem with stored nutrients. Eg: gladioli and crocus.

**Tuber:** Also stores food as a fleshy outgrowth of an underground stem but has no basal plate. Eg: dahlias and (tuber) begonias.

**Rhizome:** Thickened stems that grow horizontally, producing roots below and sending shoots from their upper surface. Eg: Iris and canna lilies.

## Timing is Everything

There are two rules to remember when planting bulbs:

1. Plant in fall for spring colour.
2. Plant in spring for late summer and fall colour.

Instead of focusing on a colour explosion, try to plan things so that each month of spring brings a pleasant surprise in the garden. Knowing approximately when bulbs flower will help you to achieve a long lasting colour display, especially when planting with a mix of flowering perennials and shrubs.

To help you plan the flowering sequence of your bulbs, the following list will give you a general idea of the order in which bulbs flower.

General heights are recorded by variety as well. Please keep in mind that the time they flower each year may vary by 3-4 weeks, depending upon the type of winter and spring we have.

Code	Height
VL (Very Low)	<6"
L (Low)	6-12"
M (Medium)	12-20"
H (High)	20-28"
V (Very High)	>28"

### Very Early (~February)

Snowdrops - VL  
 Winter Aconites - VL  
 Dwarf Iris Species - VL  
 Species Crocus - VL  
 Crocus - VL  
 Chionodoxa - VL  
 Puschkinias - VL  
 Scillas - VL  
 Fritillaria Melegris - L



### Early (~March)

Kaufmanniana Tulips - VL  
 Anemone Blanda - VL  
 Narcissus Cycamineus - L/M  
 Botanical Tulips - L/M  
 Muscari (Grape Hyacinth) - VL  
 Fosteriana Tulips - L  
 Single Early Tulips - L  
 Double Early Tulips - L  
 Scilla Sibirica - VL  
 Hyacinths - L  
 Trumpet Daffodils - M  
 Daffodils - M

### Mid-Season (~April/May)

Greigii Tulips - L/M  
 Mendel Tulips - M  
 Triumph Tulips - M  
 Small Cupped Narcissus  
 Poeticus - M

Darwin Hybrid Tulips - H  
 Fritillaria Imperialis - H

### Late (~May/June)

Spanish Scilla - L  
 Parrot Tulips - M  
 Double Late Tulips - M  
 Lily-Flowered Tulips - M  
 Cottage Tulips - H/VH  
 Darwin Tulips - H/VH  
 Allium Aflantunense - VH  
 Allium Karataviense - L

### Very Late (~June)

Dutch Iris - M  
 Allium Moly - L/M  
 Allium Giganteum - VH

## Planting for Effect

It is hard to deny that the most effective way of using bulbs is by planting in groupings. Combine minor bulbs like grape hyacinths with early flowering daffodils and tulips, hyacinths and the exotic imperial crown lily. Plant them all in groups of 3, 5, 7 or better yet 12 or more to achieve the most striking effect.

Remember that mysotis (Forget-Me-Nots), English daisies, pansies and violas, planted over the bulbs each fall, will heighten and stretch out the blooming period of your display.

Companion planting helps to maximize the interest of your display. The following list suggests some very pretty combinations:

### Bulb with Companion Shrub

Winter Aconite	Contorted Filbert
Yellow Daffodil	Bush Roses
Colchicum	Symphoricarpos (Snowberry)
Anemone Blanda	Corylopsis

### Bulb with Companion Perennial

Chionodoxa	White Arabis
Allium	Cranesbill (Geranium)
Scilla	Hosta or Doronicum
Dwarf Iris	Wooly Thyme
Snowdrops	Pink Helleborus

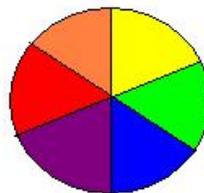
### Bulb with Companion Bulb

Muscari	White Daffodil
Blue Anemone	Gold Narcissus

## Wow! Colour Combos

Remember the colour wheel!

- **Monochromatic colours:** Are different values within the same colour, such as pale blue, blue and deep blue. Gives a soft, romantic look.
- **Analogous colours:** Are colours adjacent to each other on the wheel. Gives a similar effect as monochromatic but with more depth.
- **Complementary colours:** Are colours opposite each other on the wheel. They 'strengthen' each other and really pop. This is your drama combo!



## Getting them Started

Now that your planning is done, you're ready to plant! Each bulb has its own needs in terms of planting, but as a rule of thumb, planting depth should be two and a half to three times their width. Tiny bulbs, like snowdrops, should be planted about 3" deep to provide a little extra winter protection.

All bulbs need well-drained soil so they don't rot in wet winters. Add sand to the planting hole to improve drainage and encourage strong root development. Bonemeal will help them get off to a good start as too. Most bulbs prefer a sunny location so ensure they'll have lots of light. Remember, the pointy side goes up!

Small patio pots and tubs are ideal for bulbs, but the larger containers should be insulated, and the smaller ones tucked away in a protected area until after the coldest part of winter has past. You can enjoy your bulbs far longer if you do a little planning instead of just 'poking in' a few bulbs. Make a 'layer cake' effect with both early and late bulbs. Plant larger bulbs, such as tulips and daffodils at approximately 6" deep. Add a bit of soil, then plant smaller bulbs such as narcissus or hyacinths. Add a bit more soil, then add the smallest bulbs, such as scillas, anemones and crocus.



## Storing Bulbs

Most bulbs recommended for fall planting are hardy to zone 3 and can therefore survive winter in the ground (provided they are in good, well-drained soil). Bulbs planted in spring for summer and fall flowers are generally more tender and must be lifted out of the ground and stored for winter.

- Wait until all foliage has died down completely before gently lifting the bulb out of the ground.
- Let bulbs dry out completely before storage. Ideally, place them in wooden boxes packed with vermiculite or very dry peat moss.
- Store bulbs in a cool, but not freezing, spot with a small amount of humidity. A garage with reasonable air circulation is an ideal spot, but don't expose bulbs to a lot of carbon monoxide.