

PLANTING HARDY BULBS

Plant hardy bulbs anytime in the autumn from September until the ground freezes. Most prefer full sun, but early bloomers such as Winter Aconites, Siberian Squill, Crocus, Daffodil, Glory- of-the Snow, Grape Hyacinths, and species tulips will tolerate light shade.

Bulbs do best in well drained soil. To improve clay soils, add sand, peat or compost to a depth of 10 – 12 inches. If the soil is too sandy, work in rich peat or compost. Work a high phosphorous fertilizer such as bone meal into the soil beneath the bulbs at planting time to nourish the bulbs in subsequent years.

When planting you may either dig an area large enough for an entire cluster of bulbs or dig holes for individual bulbs. Plant species tulips 4 inches deep and improved tulips, daffodils or hyacinths 6 inches deep. Space all of these bulbs about 6 inches apart. Plant smaller bulbs such as crocus, Siberian squill, and grape hyacinth about 3 inches deep and 3 inches apart. In light, sandy soil all of these bulbs can be planted an inch or two deeper.

For bulbs in a cluster, plant all at the same depth to insure that they bloom at the same time and height. Set the bulb firmly but gently in the soil, pointed end up; then cover with soil and water well. You may mulch the bed with a 3 inch layer of leaves, peat moss, straw or other similar material after the ground has frozen, although most of these bulbs are hardy and do not require this treatment.

Incidentally, if you do not get your bulbs planted before the ground freezes, you should store them in a cool place and plant them in the first winter or spring thaw. Even then, if they were stored too long, they may perform poorly or not appear at all.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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