

Spring Flowering Bulbs



Spring flowering bulbs are an excellent way to provide color and variety to the late Winter through early Summer landscape. Some Early varieties of Crocus and Snowdrops actually bloom during the last few Winter snows.

Location

Tulips, daffodils and other fall bulbs require a half to a full day of sun and well-drained soil. They can be planted in landscape beds and perennial gardens, or they can be naturalized. Naturalized plantings are deliberately placed so that they appear unplanned. Bulbs can be planted under deciduous trees because they will make most of their growth before the tree's leaves shade their location during the summer. The roots of trees and shrubs will also help to keep the soil dry through the summer.

Preparation

Work bone meal or Dutch Bulb Food™ into the soil where the bulbs will be planted. If you have had trouble with critters munching on your bulbs, you may dig out a planting bed and line the bottom and sides with window screen. Plant the bulbs and then cover the entire area with chicken wire. Apply a thin layer of mulch to hide the wire.

Planting

In the Cincinnati area larger bulbs such as tulip, daffodils and hyacinths should be planted 6-8" deep and 6"-8" apart. Minor bulbs; crocus, snowdrops, anemones and others, should be planted at least 4"-5" deep and 4" apart. The pointed side of the bulb always goes up. If you are in doubt, plant the bulb on its side. To get a great selection of bulbs, it's best to make your purchases in September.

We then recommend that the bulbs be held for planting until mid to late October or even into November.

Watering

Water bulbs right after you plant them. If it is a dry Fall you will want to water bulb plantings about every 10 days through December.

Spring Care

After the bulbs flower, the foliage must remain intact until it browns naturally or the bulb will not be able to store enough energy to bloom next year. After flowering it will help to fertilize the bulbs with a liquid garden food.

Division

Some bulbs such as daffodils and some tulip varieties will multiply rapidly. As the bulbs multiply, the flower quality and quantity will diminish. The bulbs can easily be divided by digging them up in mid-summer after the foliage has died, or in early fall. The divided bulbs should be replanted as soon as possible.

Diseases and Pests

Some bulbs are the favorite snacks of squirrels and moles. There are some ways to control these bulb bandits. Plant daffodils around susceptible bulbs, as they are poisonous and are often avoided by wildlife. Screen beds with wire as described in the Preparation section above. As a last resort, do not plant bulbs that are constantly disappearing. Experiment with different varieties. In very moist area fungus can be a problem. This can be avoided by dusting bulbs with sulfur-based fungicides following label directions.