

How to Plant Spring Flowering Bulbs

A spring flowering bulb is one of the most reliable and fuss-free ways of achieving a really colourful garden during spring. One of the best things about most spring flowering bulbs is that they're very easy to grow. Simply plant them in the ground or containers in the autumn and wait for them to emerge a few months later!

How to Plant Bulbs

Bulbs usually have a pointy end and a rounded end. The pointed end is where the flower stalk grows from, and the rounded end produces roots. Some roots will be visible on the rounded ends of the bulbs when they arrive. A general rule for planting bulbs is that they should be planted at around 2-3 times their own depth. Some bulbs are bigger than others, meaning that larger bulbs will be planted deeper than smaller bulbs. This means that you can choose combinations of large and small bulbs to plant together in 'layers' either in containers or the ground.

Heavier Soils

If you have particularly heavy soil, it's sometimes worth adding a bit of sand or grit to your planting holes to help with drainage and prevent the bulb from rotting.

Planting Combinations

If planting combinations of bulbs, besides choosing which colours look good together, it's also worth checking the flowering times and flower heights to ensure you get a great effect if you decide to do a bulb lasagne.

Safety Note

Remember that all bulbs can be harmful if consumed. We also recommend wearing gloves when planting bulbs as some bulbs, such as hyacinth, may cause irritation on the skin.

Ongoing Care

Most bulbs are low maintenance and will happily look after themselves. Once their flowers have faded it's a good idea to dead-head them to prevent seed heads from forming. By dead-heading, the bulb saves its energy for next year's flowers instead of putting it into the seed-forming process. Some people like to cut the foliage off after flowering, however, it should be left intact for at least 6-8 weeks to allow it to continue photosynthesising and putting energy back down to the bulb to enable them to re-grow next year. For best results leave the foliage intact until it's brown.

Bulb Details

Bulb Type	Planting Depth	Planting Distance	Planting Position	Additional Information
Allium	2-3 times depth of bulb	25-30 cm	Full Sun	Flowers late spring/early summer. Tall varieties sometimes require support
Daffodil/ Narcissus	2-3 times depth of bulb	15-20 cm	Full Sun, Partial Shade	Typical-looking bulbs with a papery skin and a pointed top
Crocus	2-3 times depth of bulb	10-15 cm	Full Sun, Partial Shade	Perfect for growing through grass as well as in patio containers
Tulip	2-3 times depth of bulb	15-20 cm	Full Sun	Usually bulbs are large with a pointy top side and roots underneath
Muscari	5-10 cm	5-10 cm	Partial Shade, Shade	Plant in groups for a big impact and natural look
Ranunculus	5 cm	15-20 cm	Full Sun	Plant with the "claws" pointing downwards

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Anemone	5-10 cm	5-10 cm	Full Sun, Partial Shade, Shade	Top isn't always obvious so can be planted on their side if unsure
Cyclamen	2-3 cm	5-10 cm	Partial Shade, Shade	Plant shallowly with the top visible. Often corm has shoots at the top and roots
Eranthis (Winter Aconite)	2-3 cm	5-10 cm	Partial Shade, Shade	Top isn't always obvious so can be planted on their side if unsure
Fritillaria Meleagris	2-3 times depth of bulb	10-15 cm	Partial Shade, Shade	Small bulb with a slightly pointed top. Ideal for woodland planting
Snowdrop	2-3 times depth of bulb	10-15 cm	Full Sun, Partial Shade, Shade	Plant bulbs in groups for a natural look. Grows well in beds and borders
Bluebell	10-15 cm	10-15 cm	Partial Shade, Shade	Create a woodland effect by planting under trees and around shrubs
Colchicum	10 cm	10-15 cm	Full Sun	Flowers Sep-Oct, leaves to follow retained until mid-summer. Needs well drained soil