

Bulbs

Dig!

Choose a spot with good drainage. Dig to the depth required for the bulbs you're planting; mix some compost into the soil. The recommended planting depth will be on the bulb packaging. A general rule is to plant a bulb three times as deep as it measures from tip to root base. For instance a bulb that is two inches from tip to root base should be planted six inches deep.

Plant!

The pointed end goes up. Some people place bulbs an exact distance apart. Others take up a handful and drop them into the prepared hole.

To achieve a naturalized look toss out a handful of bulbs and plant them where they land.

Whether to toss or place is up to you and your particular sense of design. The more important suggestion is to plant a group of bulbs rather than one or two. Five, seven or many more make a more dramatic planting.

Work bonemeal or bulb fertilizer into the bottom of the hole. Both additives will remain in the soil to be taken up by mature roots for the following year's growth.

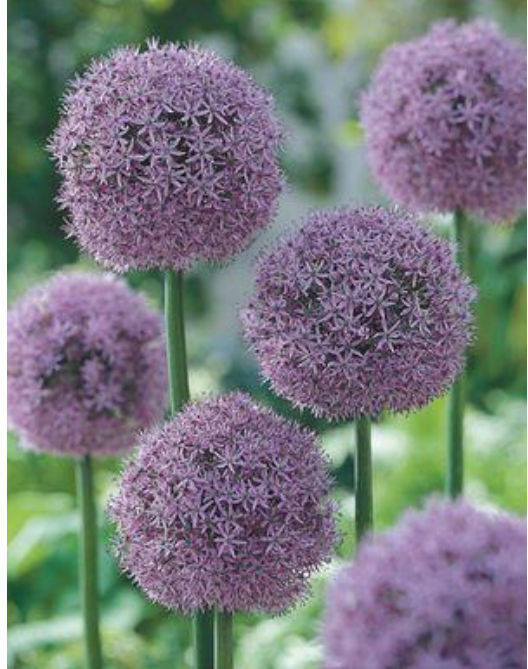
Don't feed that thieving varmint!

Moles do not eat bulbs. Moles eat insects and grubs. But mice, voles, chipmunks and squirrels eat bulbs. As a matter of fact they devour them as though they were the world's best candy.

Try one or all of the following:

- Spray each bulb with an animal repellent before planting.
- After planting and watering well, top the planted area with mulch and thorny clippings from a rose bush.
- After planting the bulbs refill the hole and place chicken wire, quarter-inch mesh or old window screen over the planted area. Tuck the ends into the soil to keep it from slipping. Cover the wire or screen with more soil and a thick layer of mulch. Early in spring remember to remove the protection.

• Don't worry about daffodil and hyacinth bulbs. They evidently have a bitter taste that critters don't like. Fritillaria, Alliums and Hyacinthoides are also unpalatable.



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GREENHOUSES & GARDEN CENTER

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13 Archie St., Auburn NY 13021

Located off Rte 38A in Auburn (315) 253-3030

Bulbs

Hungry deer

Deer love to munch on spring bulb plants, although they too shun the varieties the rodents don't like. They also avoid human hair, soap shavings, bonemeal and dried blood— temporarily at least. You will have better luck spraying plants with a repellent such as "Deer Stopper."

After-care

Each spring fertilize your flowering bulbs when leaf tips first poke through the soil. Repeat after the blooms have finished. Plant-tone, Bulb-tone, or 5-10-5 can be used.

After flowering cut off the flower stems, but let the leaves stay on to make food for the bulb. Do not remove the foliage until it turns yellow and withers. To hide the foliage, plant some annuals among or around the bulbs.

Getting to know each bulb

Allium. Blooms in spring or summer. Long-lasting, interesting seed heads. Thrives in full sun. Tolerates a little shade.

Anemone. Full or partial sun. Double poppy-style blooms in rosy pink, white, and blue.

Camassia. Stunning brilliant blue spires on tall stems. Full sun.

Chionodoxa. 'Glory of the Snow' lifts its head to look outside when the snow begins to melt.

Cyclamen. Dainty blossoms in fall for the rock garden or the woodland border.

Crocus. Full sun to partial sun. Because they bloom and die down before it's time to mow they can be naturalized in the middle of the lawn.

Daffodil (Narcissus). Full sun or filtered shade. Deer-proof.

Fritillaries. A tough survivor. Some have fascinating checkered patterns. Others have pendulous yellow or orange flowers.

Galanthus. 'Snowdrop' is the first flower of spring. Full or part sun.

Hyacinth. Wonderful fragrance. Plant in full sun. Deer Resistant.

Leucojum. Summer Snowflake produces nodding bells on graceful foliage.



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Muscari. 'Grape Hyacinth" is an early bloomer. Full or partial sun.

Puschkinia. Little known, under used. A lovely flower for the earliest spring garden. Delicate fragrance.

Saffron Crocus. Fall flowering. Large flowers produce saffron threads for flavoring. Sun.

Scilla. Long living bulbs. Full or partial sun.

Tulip. For best effect plant in groups of at least five. Full or partial sun.

Waterlily Colchicum. Large lavender-pink flowers every fall. Sunny spot for best color. Full sun with later afternoon shade.

Planting hardy bulbs in containers for indoor blooms

Choose a pot of the desired size for planting your bulbs. Although most sizes will work, a 6- to 8-inch pot will give your bulbs enough growing room.

If the pot has no drainage hole, place a one-inch drainage layer in the bottom of the pot. Use gravel, stones or perlite.

Add sufficient potting mix so the tips of the bulbs will be even with the top of the pot. Arrange the bulbs on top with the pointed ends facing up.

Cover the bulbs with more potting mix to within 1/4" of the pot lip. The tips of the bulbs should be visible. Water the bulbs and move the container to a cool area such as a shed or unheated garage, or the refrigerator. The bulbs require 13 weeks at 35-48 degrees Fahrenheit. Water as needed.

In a few months, you'll begin to see signs of growth. At this point, bring the container indoors and water regularly. Place in bright light until flowers show color (3-4 weeks). Once color is visible, move to bright indirect light. Soon you'll be rewarded with beautiful blooms.

If you're preparing a container of flowering bulbs to place on your deck or patio, keep the container in a garage or basement where the temperature stays around 35-40 degrees Fahrenheit. A cold frame can also be used. If kept outside the bulbs will be subjected to a damaging freeze/thaw cycle. In March you can safely place your container of bulbs in their outdoor location and enjoy the emerging spring color.

Planting Paperwhites and other non-hardy Narcissus

These bulbs can be planted in soil the same way as the hardy bulbs. They can also be planted in a container without drainage holes. Put 1-2" of washed stone the bottom of the pot. Place the bulbs on the stone and add additional stone to within 1/4" of the tops of the bulbs. Keep the water level at the base of the bulbs. Keep in a cool dark place for 2 weeks (50-60 degrees Fahrenheit), then bring into low light. Keep cool. When leaves develop, move to a cool, sunny window. The best temperature is 70-75 degrees during the day, and 60-65 degrees Fahrenheit at night. Too high temperature will cause the leaves to grow too tall and may reduce flowering. Move to bright indirect light when flower color is visible.