

Bulbs! How do I get them  
to flourish!

Tracy Morgan



# What is BULB?



- ✦ Bulbs are little packets of flowers that make us wait weeks, or months, for results.
- ✦ Bulb refers to true bulbs, tuberous roots, tubers, corms, and rhizomes.
- ✦ There are two types of bulbs
  - ✦ Spring bulbs: Hardy bulbs, are planted in the fall and spend winter in the ground then flower in the spring. These include tulips, irises, daffodils, hyacinth, allium and crocus.



- ✦ Summer bulbs: These are tender bulbs that are planted in the spring and flower in the summer or leaf out in summer. These types of bulbs include gladiolus, lilies, caladium and elephant ears. Dahlias are also a summer bulb that will bloom until late summer into fall.



# Tuberous roots, tubers corms and rhizomes

- ✦ Tuberous roots are thick fleshy storage roots. Examples include asparagus, dahlia, daylilies, peonies, some irises, sweet potatoes and many more.
- ✦ Tubers are usually short and thick and typically grow below the soil. They are composed of starch storing tissue. Potatoes would be a
- ✦ Corms are fleshy, vertical, underground stems that act as a food storage structures. Typical corms are crocus and gladiolus.

# Tuberous roots, tubers, corms, and rhizomes

- ✦ Rhizomes are a continuously growing horizontally underground stem that grow out lateral shoots and roots. Examples are ginger, turmeric, bamboo, cannas, lily of the valley, orchids and many more.

# Growing flowering bulbs



- ✦ Choose the types of bulbs to grow
- ✦ Prepare soil for planting
- ✦ Plant 12 or more of two different kinds in the same area
- ✦ Water and weed regularly
- ✦ Cut flowers and enjoy

# Planting bulbs



- ✦ Using a shovel, trowel, or dibble create a hole for each bulb. Verify depth of each bulb type. Plant close together 3-5 inches apart for thick layer of flowers. For rows plant 6-8 inches apart.
- ✦ Cover bulbs with soil and soak with water to settle bulb. Add mulch around area. You do not need to fertilize or add amendments unless soil tests indicate a deficiency.
- ✦ Always plant bulbs with their tips pointing upward



# Caring for your bulbs



- ✦ Mulch keeps bulbs from freezing and thawing in the winter. It also helps with weed control and soil temperature.
- ✦ Weed regularly as weeds will reduce the nutrients from the ground as well as water supply for your bulbs.
- ✦ Make sure to cut flowers in the morning or evenings and use a sharp clean knife. A knife works better than sheers or scissors as these tools can crush the stems.
- ✦ After blooming and fading cut off flowers so that seeds do not form. Seeds also take food and water away from the bulb



# Sequence of flowering



- ✦ By having a variety of bulbs in your garden you can enjoy flowering from early spring to fall.
- ✦ Early spring bulbs: Snowdrops, Winter Aconite, Danford Iris, Crocus, Glory of the Snow, Early Daffodils
- ✦ Mid-spring bulbs: Checkered Lily, Tulips, Early Allium, Hyacinths, Summer Snowflake, Medium-Cupped Daffodils
- ✦ Late Spring bulbs: Dutch Hybrid Iris, Midseason Tulips, Late Daffodils, Allium

# Using bulbs in pots



- ✦ Did you know bulbs often do better in pots!
- ✦ Pack pots and don't be afraid to overlap and use different types of bulbs. Use as many and different sizes as you can.
- ✦ Tulips work very well in pots as do daffodils.
- ✦ For best results use planting soil
- ✦ Leave pots outside so they get cold. The cold stimulates growth and flowering. This is called overwintering.
- ✦ After blooms have faded allow to die back. Remove bulbs and replant in the fall. You can leave the bulbs in the pot for next year as they will remain dormant. You do not have to water bulbs until autumn

# Indoor bulbs



- ✦ The most famous indoor is the Amaryllis.
- ✦ This is a summer bulb that needs to be brought in during the winter. You can plant Amaryllis outside but will need to remove the bulb each year and bring it in.
- ✦ Forcing is another method of bring bulbs inside. This is done by placing the bulb tip up, where the bottom of the bulb is  $1/8$  to  $1/4$  inch below the water level. The rooting system reach into the water and the bulb begins to grow. This method can also be done using gravel and potting soil.




# Planting schedule



- ✦ Depending on your zone will be key to when to plant.
- ✦ Zones 4-7 in colder climates, 6-8 weeks before first ground freeze. Soil temps should be between 40\*-50\* F
- ✦ Zones 8-10 depending on the bulb 6-10 weeks before first ground freeze. Make sure the ground is cool enough for planting. If soil does not freeze you may place bulbs inside your refrigerator for storing and they will winter over in there.




# Planting schedule Spring bulbs



- ✦ September to October Zones 4-5
- ✦ October to November Zones 6-7
- ✦ November to early December Zones 8-9
- ✦ Late December to early January Zone 10

# Planting schedule Summer bulbs



- ✦ Late March to May Zones 8-10
- ✦ May to June Zones 4-7

# Dos and Don'ts



- ✦ Always plant bulbs in boards or beds with good drainage
- ✦ Do not use strong commercial fertilizers or fresh manure when planting
- ✦ Always cut as little foliage as possible
- ✦ Do not let a tulip flower go to seed
- ✦ Always let foliage die back before trimming or digging up

# Dos and Don'ts



- ✦ Never dry bulbs in the sun
- ✦ Always store bulbs in a dry, well ventilated area to prevent mold or mildew. Do not store in air tight containers
- ✦ Do not grow tulips bulbs year after year in the same place
- ✦ Always label bulbs properly, do not rely on memory alone



# References



- ✦ <http://pubs.cahnrs.wsu.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/publications/em2869e.pdf>
- ✦ <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/bulbs/selection.cfm>
- ✦ <https://today.oregonstate.edu/news/pot-some-bulbs-and-dream-spring>
- ✦ <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/bulbs/indoor.cfm>

















Flower Bulb Layering for 2x - 4x the Blooms!

