

## **Crocus, Tulips, Narcissus and Hyacinths**

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**These are some of the easiest flowers to grow.**

**Landscape Design:** These plants can be used effectively in a variety of landscapes. They can be included in formal plantings, garden meadows, woodland gardens, borders, rock gardens, raised beds, containers and even forced indoors (see Forcing Bulbs, MF-2077). Two of the simplest designs are to plant bulbs in clusters (no less than five) of one variety in a group. The other is to throw the bulbs on the ground and plant them where they lie. Use caution when selecting varieties. Don't use too many species or even different varieties of a single species unless you have a very large area to landscape.

**Planting Site:** Spring blooming plants need a well drained soil. When the soil stays wet for a long time, they will rot. Adding organic matter such as compost, humus, manures or hay will improve all soil types. Add 1 inch or more over the planting area. It doesn't matter how much you add as long as it is worked in evenly and deeply. The amount of sunlight will determine how quickly the soil will dry. For most, full sun is best as light diminishes, less food is produced for storage in the bulb. Plants need light to produce food.

**Nutrients (Fertilizing):** Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are the three most needed soil nutrients. Test soil before planting and after adding organic matter. Contact the Extension office for soil testing information. If phosphorus or potassium is needed, it must be incorporated to a depth greater than planting. Forget the old rule of thumb of a tablespoon of bone meal or bulb food applied to the planting hole of each bulb, add nitrogen fertilizer to all plants. In a split-application, once in the fall after planting and again as leaf tips emerge the next season. Fertilize established plants the same way. Use a quick-release or water-soluble nitrogen fertilizer. The fertilizer label will tell you how much to use. It doesn't take much.

**Buying Bulbs:** Bigger is best when it comes to selecting bulbs. The bigger the bulb, the bigger your flower will be this season. That doesn't mean you have to buy only the largest bulbs. Smaller bulbs will be less costly, but less showy this season. You are likely to get what you pay for. Bulbs should be firm and free of blemishes, cuts, molds or soft spots. They should feel heavy for their size, not light and dried up.

**Storage:** Plant as soon as possible after purchase. When you need to store bulbs, place them in a breathable container and keep them cool. This will reduce respiration or the use of stored energy.

**Planting:** Depth is based on soil and plant species. Heavy clays need a shallow planting to prevent rot. Most are planted at a depth equal to three times their diameter. Depth is measured to the bottom of the hole and not from the top of the bulb. Plant the bulb with the pointed end up. It is important to plant each species at the same depth to have them all blooming at once next season.

**Watering:** A thorough watering after planting is just about all they require. Natural rainfall usually supplies the rest. If it gets too dry, water thoroughly but not frequently. Roots of these plants grow deeply.

**Frost:** These plants are naturally cold hardy. Leaves may get injured from frost with no damage to the flower. Only if temperatures drop into the lower 20 degree F does injury result to the flower. Snow cover helps protect plants. When necessary, cover flowers with fabric, boxes or hay. Don't use plastic or metal where plant material will come into contact. These materials conduct cold temperatures.

**Flower Stalks:** After the petals drop, remove the spent flower stalk with scissors, sharp knife or hand pruners. Cut below the bloom, leaving the stem on the plant.

**Leaves:** Plant leaves provide the energy to produce the flower. Food from the leaves is moved to the bulbs. Don't remove the leaves before they have yellowed completely or you will be taking away energy needed for next year's bloom. If the yellowing foliage is offensive, hide it with other plants. Tying green leaves together will reduce food being made for the flower. Bulbs planted only for annual display can be cut off or pulled up after bloom.

## **HYACINTHS**

Hyacinth are fragrant plants. In their first year their spikes are dense, but in subsequent years spikes are shorter and looser. They usually bloom with early tulips in April.

## **CROCUS**

Bunch or snow crocus are the first blooming spring flower. They normally appear in March. They are comprised of chrysanthus, sieberi and tomasinianus varieties. Blooming about two weeks later are the more common large flower venus hybrids. Fall-flowering crocus are similar in appearance, but bloom from September to January. These plants come from corms and not bulbs. They have grass like foliage and can be planted anywhere in the landscape.

## **NARCISSUS**

Narcissus are commonly called daffodil or jonquil. Although jonquil is just one division of all the daffodils. Narcissus are separated into 13 divisions.

**Trumpet** (Division 1) – one flower per stem; trumpet as long as or longer than the petals, 8 to 24 inches tall, bloom time varies.

**Long** (Division 2) – cupped, one flower per stem; cup more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  but less than petals, 12 to 24 inches tall, bloom time varies.

**Short** (Division 3) – cupped, one flower per stem; cup not more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  the length of the petals, 14 to 18 inches tall, bloom time varies.

**Double** (Division 4) – double flowers, one or more flowers per stem, some are fragrant, 16 inches tall, April/May blooming, protect from wind.

**Triandrus** (Division 5) – several bent-back flowers per stem, slender foliage, fruity fragrance, 10 to 16 inches tall, April blooming.

**Cyclamineus** (Division 6) – bent-back petals, one flower per stem, 7 to 12 inches tall, early April blooming, more shade and moisture tolerant than other divisions.

**Jonquilla** (Division 7) – two to six fragrant flowers per stem, 7 to 16 inches tall, May blooming.

**Tazetta** (Division 8) – many small flowers on many stems per bulb, fragrant flowers, 7 to 18 inches tall, May blooming.

**Poeticus** (Division 9) – large white petals, fragrant, 12 to 18 inches tall, April/May blooming.

**Bulbocodium Hybrids** (Division 10) – 5 to 12 inches, white and yellow, large megaphone trumpet, small petals, May blooming.

**Split-Cup (Butterfly, Split-Corona)** (Division 11) – Cups are split into multiple sections at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  its length against contrasting petals, 16 inches tall, April blooming.

**Miscellaneous** (Division 12) – other.

**Species & Wild** (Division 13) – 6 to 14 inches tall, April blooming.

## TULIPS

There are many types of tulips. Most garden tulips are vigorous and free blooming only in their first year and are usually replaced annually. Particular varieties which are planted deep (up to 10 inches) can survive for several years. To prevent summer rotting from rainfall, plant annuals as an example over the tulips to use up soil moisture. Darwin hybrids and fosterianas (Emperor) can continue to produce for 2 to 3 years or more before they begin to decline. When planted correctly, the longest-lived tulips are among the species, greigii and kaufmanniana groups.

<b>Early Flowering Tulips (April)</b>	<b>Single Early</b> 10 to 15 inches tall, large flower. <b>Double Early</b> 10 to 12 inches tall. <b>Water Lily</b> ( <i>T. kaufmanniana</i> ) 4 to 8 inches tall, pointed petaled. <b>Emperor</b> ( <i>T. fosteriana</i> ) 8 to 20 inches tall, flowers up to 8 inches wide. <b>Species</b> 5 to 10 inches tall.
<b>Mid-season Flowering Tulips (April/May)</b>	<b>Giant Darwin Hybrids</b> (Perennial) 18 to 24 inches tall, with large flowers. <b>Triumphs</b> 18 to 22 inches tall except one dwarf of 8 to 10 inches tall with strong stems.
<b>Late Flowering Tulips (May)</b>	<b>Single Late</b> (Darwins, Cottage, Old Breeder, Scheepers' Hybrid, French) 22 to 30 inches tall. <b>Lily-Flowered</b> 20 to 24 inches tall. <b>Fringed</b> (Crispa) 20 to 24 inches tall with lacy petals. <b>Viridiflora</b> (Green) 12 to 26 inches tall. <b>Rembrandt</b> 18 to 20 inches tall. <b>Parrot</b> 18 to 22 inches tall with bicolored and fringed petals. <b>Double Late</b> (Peony) 18 to 20 inches tall with a peony like bloom.

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