

Spring Bulbs



Bulbs can be used in nearly any garden or patio setting, giving you flowers, fragrance and brilliant colour with just a little effort. You will be amazed at what will grow from these little brown bulbs. “Bigger is better” when choosing tubers, corms or rhizomes. Energy for the initial spurt of Spring growth is stored in the bulb or tuber, so a larger bulb means more stored energy and a stronger, healthier plant.

Planting Bulbs

Plant bulbs at the depth recommended on the label. A general rule is to plant bulbs at a depth three times the greater diameter of the bulb. Dig a hole and sprinkle fertilizer with a high middle number like bonemeal 2-14-0 in the bottom. Place the bulb in the hole with the pointed end up.

Cover the bulb with one inch of soil and water well. Fill in the rest of the hole with soil and water thoroughly. Do not water again until shoots begin to appear. A 5 cm layer of mulch on top of the bed will help prevent weeds and retain moisture. To improve clay-bearing soils, add sand, peat or compost to the top layer.

Watering and Feeding

Keep the soil moist throughout the growing season. Use a recommended flower or bulb fertilizer, as well as bonemeal for continuous blooming.

Spring Planted Bulbs for Summer Flowers

Corms and Tubers that can be saved from year to year

Name (& Type)	Height (cm)	Planting Depths	Comments
Anemones (Corm)	12.5-20	5	- Soak tubers overnight before planting. Old leaf scars mark the top. Very colourful.
Begonias (Tuber)	30-45	5-7.5	- Available in many colours. Use in shady spots and hanging baskets. Plant cupped side up.
Caladiums (Tuber)	30-60	5-7.5	- Beautiful foliage for shady areas. Old stem scars mark the top. Too much nitrogen causes loss of colour.
Calla Lillies (Tuber)	60-90	5-7.5	- Elegant white flower on 15 cm spike.
Cannas (Rhizome)	45-120	7.5-10	- Large and dwarf varieties. Many of these naturalize well and come back as perennials.
Dahlias (Tuber)	30-90	5-7.5	- Many different colours and flower types. Handle tubers with care. Dig after killing frost and store.
Elephant Ears (Tuber)	90-180	12.5-15	- Huge green leaves give a “tropical look.” Bigger bulbs make bigger plants and leaves.
Gladiolus (Corm)	120-180	7.5-10	- Flowering spikes in many colours. May need staking or wind protection. Dig 6 to 8 weeks after flowering.
Lillies (Bulb)	75-135	10-12.5	- Perennial favourites in a broad range of colours.
Ranunculus (Corm)	12.5-17.5	5-7.5	- Beautiful assortment of colours. Plant with fingers pointing down.

Winter Care and Storage

Throughout the growing season, bulbs and tubers send manufactured food down into underground storage. This becomes stored energy for next year’s growth. In cold winter areas, spring bulbs must be dug up as winter approaches to save them for next year. Otherwise treat them as an annual. Discontinue watering two to three weeks before the first frost to encourage dormancy. Carefully dig up the bulbs after the first killing frost freezes the top growth. Be careful not to damage the bulb. Dry bulbs for a week in a dark, ventilated area. Dust with General Purpose Fungicide and store in an open paper bag or nylon stocking. Cover bulbs with dry peat moss or vermiculite so they do not touch one another. Bulbs are best stored at 10 to 15°C.

Storing Gladiolus Corms

- allow leaves to wither naturally for 6 to 8 weeks after blooming before digging. Remove tops close to the corm. Leave to dry for one day. Store newly formed corm and cormlets in open boxes of peat in a cool space for winter.

Storing Canna Lily

- dig up rhizome with some soil after tops are killed outdoors by the frost. Clean the rhizomes and store in barely moist peat moss in a cool location.

Storing Begonia Tubers

- Lift plants in late October; allow foliage to die-down, then remove stems. Store tubers in dry peat moss in a cool basement.

Storing Dahlia Tubers

- After first killing frosts, dig up tubers. Remove extra soil and broken roots, and stand upside down for one week to dry. Store in a dry, cool area in peat moss.

Iris

- Dig up to divide and replant in compost-rich soil every three to five years for better blooms.

Calla Lilies

- Tubers can be dug when all the leaves have yellowed and dried in September. If in pots, gradually decrease watering as leaves yellow and die. Lay pot on side in a cool place, allowing it to dry fully.

Caladiums

- Require four months of good growing conditions to store food in the tuber for next year’s growth. In fall, dry out plants and store in a warm area until spring.

Freesia

- When blooming period is over, continue to fertilize and water to build storage for next year. As foliage yellows, gradually reduce watering. Store dry corms in a cool, dry basement. Dust with bulb fungicide/miticide.

Lilies

- Leave undisturbed as long as blooming is satisfactory. Spent blooms should be removed and flower stem gradually cut back. Keep fertilizing to ensure good bulb formation for next year. Replant if blooming becomes poor. Remove and plant bulblets (small bulbs) in rich, well-drained soil. Some species will spread naturally.

Ranunculus

- Before heavy frost after foliage has died naturally, dig up corms. Store in a dry, cool location until spring.

Acidanthera and Montbretia

- In fall, lift plants before heavy frost. Let dry in open air. Store plants in boxes or flats in a dry, cool place until April.

Anemones de Caen and St. Brigids

- Before heavy frost, dig up corms. Dry in well-aerated place. Store in dry, cool location.

Gladiolus

Superb as cut flowers and effective in the border, gladiolus blooms start to open from the bottom of the spike upwards. A full two weeks of continuous colour can be obtained from one plant alone. Planting can begin as soon as tree leaves unfold in the garden. Continuous bloom can be achieved from mid-summer until fall by making several plantings at two week intervals up to mid-June, or by planting a choice of cultivars that bloom very early to very late.

Very early	65 to 70 days from planting
Early	70 to 75 days
Early Medium	75 to 80 days
Medium	80 to 85 days
Late Medium	85 to 90 days
Late	90 to 100 days
Very Late	100 to 105 days

Colours available – Red, scarlet, orange, pink, salmon, yellow, white, purple and lavender.

