

Preparing Beds for Fall Bulb Planting

Fall is the time to prepare beds for bulbs to be planted in the fall. Cultivate the soil by single digging (digging to a depth equal to the shovel or fork). Digging helps to air the soil and allows water to soak through. This is a good time to add humus which revitalizes the soil's constituents. Prepared beds should be allowed to sit for a day or so before planting. There are many bulb varieties with different requirements. Some prefer heavy soil while others prefer light soil. Tulips for instance prefer sandy and dry soil. Cyclamineus daffodils can tolerate shade and naturalize well. For the most part, a fertile soil with good drainage and exposure to sun is recommended. Light soil dries quickly in the spring, warms up fast and gets the growing season off to a good start.



Select only the bulbs of best quality. Bulbs should not be spotted or spongy. Plant them as soon as you get them so they do not dry out. Follow directions on packages for planting instructions of depth and width. If you plant them too deep the bulbs multiply less, but they produce a healthy sized bloom for several years. Place a layer of sand beneath the bulbs. Add bulb food per manufacturer's instructions. Too high a mineral content in the soil harms both plants and soil. Water well and apply mulch to encourage healthy growth and provide protection from dryness, weather extremes, bruising, pests, weeds, and erosion after planting.

For further information:

[North Carolina State](#) has an extensive site on spring flowering bulbs. Information on general characteristics, cultural information, and companion plants is provided for each bulb listed.

The [Royal Horticultural Society](#) has an excellent article on spring bulbs.

References

Bonar, Ann *The Garden Plant Survival Manual*. Gallery Books, 1989.

Sunset Western Garden Book. Editors, Sunset Publishing corporation, 1995

