

Spring Bulbs: After the Bloom – Then What?

Before the Thanksgiving turkey has been cooked Americans will have tucked more than 1 billion tulips, daffodils and other bulbs into the earth, according to the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Center. Then they wait for the ground to burst forth in the middle of winter with carpets of glorious blooms. We have now enjoyed that marvelous burst of spring color and the blooms have started to fade. What is the appropriate method of caring for some of these bulbs now that the flowers are spent? The best method of tulip care, in mild climates, is to discard the bulbs and plant new ones in the fall. In cold climates, snip off the spent flowers so they don't go to seed. Then fertilize with a good all-purpose fertilizer. Allow the tulip to die back naturally. The leaves will manufacture nutrients, sending them to the bulb for next year's bloom. Consider concealing the fading foliage. The foliage may be removed when it has completely died back.

Withhold water from daffodils to encourage summer dormancy. Snap off the faded blooms. Treat the foliage as you would tulips. Daffodils will naturalize in the garden, increasing in number every year. When clumps become so dense that they decline in vigor and produce fewer blooms, it is time to divide and replant immediately so you won't miss a single bloom next spring.

For more information we suggest:

- [Daffodil](#) Sunset Magazine, September 1999
- [American Daffodil Society](#)
- [How to Grow Beautiful Daffodils and Narcissi](#) Retrieved 3/13/07
- [Tulip Growing Tips](#) Retrieved 3/13/07