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A Guide to Flower Gardening: Gardening with Bulbs

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A Guide to Flower Gardening: Gardening with Bulbs

Gardening continues to top list after list of most popular pastimes, and it is easy to understand why. Producing a beautiful garden provides a sense of pride and accomplishment that few hobbies can rival, and gardening can be a relaxing, yet challenging pastime. Whether you already have a certified green thumb, or you are just beginning to explore the rich world of gardening, we hope you will find this information useful and interesting.

An Introduction to Bulb Flowers

Just about every flower gardener will work with bulb plants at one time or another. Bulbs are loved by gardeners for the ease with which they grow, their hardiness and the fact that they can bloom again and again for many consecutive seasons without the need to replant. With all these advantages, it is no wonder that bulb plants are so popular among both new and experienced gardeners.

Choosing the right bulbs, however, is one thing that many beginning gardeners have trouble with. After you develop an eye and feel for finding the best bulbs, however, you will be able to spot them from across the garden center.

When choosing bulbs for your garden, it is important to choose the firmest and largest bulbs. The size of the bulb is important, since large bulbs are more likely to provide many blooms. The firmness of the bulb is a good indication of its health, and bulbs that are soft or mushy are unlikely to bloom. Bulbs are particularly susceptible to water damage. It is important to choose a bulb that is not too soft, but it is also important to look for cracks or scars. Bulbs with cracks or scars may have become too dry to bloom. Likewise, any bulbs that have begun to sprout roots should be avoided, as they are unlikely to bloom properly once planted.

How bulbs are planted in the garden is important as well. Most bulbs are best planted in the fall, most commonly in early to mid October. The goal is to get the bulbs into the ground six weeks before the ground begins to freeze, so obviously the best time to plant will vary from location to location.

Bulbs should be planted in a well prepared soil, and the depth they should be planted will be determined by the type of bulb. For example, crocus bulbs are generally planted four inches deep, daffodil and hyacinth bulbs six inches deep and tulip bulbs at a depth of eight inches.

A simple gardening tool called a bulb planter is great for achieving a more uniform look to the blooming garden. Bulb planters can be used to easily prepare perfect looking rows of flowers. Those gardeners who prefer a more wild and freewheeling look, on the

other hand, often dig a single hole and plant several bulbs in it. This approach can lead to spectacular, if somewhat unpredictable patterns, once the bulbs begin to bloom.

It is important to use a small amount of fertilizer at the bottom of each hole you dig when planting bulbs. The fertilizer should then be topped with a thin layer of soil, and the bulb carefully placed on top of the soil. It is important not to place the bulb directly on top of the fertilizer, as doing so could damage the bulb. Bulbs are always planted with the pointed end stick up and the flat, rooted side lying on top of the layer of soil. After the bulbs are in place, the rest of the hole should be filled with soil and the garden should be given a thorough watering.

Even though bulbs are among the hardiest of garden plants, there are a few important things to remember. One important technique to become familiar with is deadheading. The term deadheading should already be familiar to those gardeners who work with perennials. Deadheading is simply removing spent blooms in order to encourage more blossoms to develop. This process is important with bulb plants as well. When working with bulbs, however, it is important not to remove the leaves from the plants until the leaves have begun turning brown.

Taking care of the bulbs over the winter is important as well. In warmer climates, many bulbs can remain in the ground over winter. It is important, however, to remove tender bulbs such as dahlias, even in warmer climates. These bulbs should be stored over the winter in a cool, dry location.

Bulbs are wonderful plants for any gardener, from the newest to the most experienced. Their combination of hardiness, color and beauty make them hard to beat for any flower enthusiast.

Popular Types of Bulb Flowers

Bulbs are among the most attractive, and easiest to care for, flowers in the garden. A bulb garden in full bloom can be a wonderful, attractive sight for any gardener.

Another great thing about bulbs is the sheer variety in which they come. There are bulb plants to satisfy virtually any taste, and bulb plants come in a staggering variety of colors, sizes, shapes and textures.

Even within bulb families, there is quite a bit of variety. The humble tulip, for instance, boasts a variety of different shaped blooms, from the traditional bell shaped to a number of more exotic varieties. With all these varieties to choose from, finding just the right bulbs for your garden can be difficult. We are, therefore, providing this guide to popular bulb flowers, including their optimum growing conditions.

Crocus

Bulb Type: Corm

Sunlight: Full sun or partial shade
Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

Dahlia

Bulb Type: Tuberous Root
Sunlight: Full sun; partial shade in hot climates
Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

Galanthus (Snowdrop)

Bulb Type: True Bulb
Sunlight: Full sun or partial shade
Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

Gladiolus

Bulb Type: Corm
Sunlight: Full sun
Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

Hererocallis (Daylily)

Bulb Type: Tuberous Root
Sunlight: Full sun or light shade
Water: Regular watering during growing season

Hyacinthus (Dutch Hyacinth)

Bulb Type: True Bulb
Sunlight: Full sun
Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

Iris

Bulb Type: Rhizome
Sunlight: Full sun or light shade
Water: Regular watering during growing season

Lilium (Asiatic and Oriental Hybrid Lilies)

Bulb Type: True Bulb
Sunlight: Full sun or partial shade
Water: Regular watering is required. The root zone must never be allowed to dry out.

Muscari (Grape Hyacinth)

Bulb Type: True Bulb
Sunlight: Full sun or light shade
Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

Narcissus (Daffodil, Narcissus)

Bulb Type: True Bulb
Sunlight: Full sun
Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

Tulipa (Tulip)

Bulb Type: True Bulb

Sunlight: Full sun

Water: Regular watering during growth and bloom periods

No matter what types of bulb flowers you choose to plant, if you follow the instructions carefully and give them the growing conditions they need to thrive, you will be rewarded with many seasons of beautiful blooms from these spectacular plants.

How to Divide Bulbs Properly

One of the features of bulbs that make them so attractive is the ability for the gardener to divide their bulb plants to produce new growth, share with friends, or just plant in different areas of the landscape.

In addition, many bulb flowers become overgrown, and reducing the growth through dividing bulbs is the best way to get things back under control. It is generally easy to tell when a planting of bulbs needs to be divided. One sure sign is when a previously well blooming planting of bulbs has begun to provide only sparse blooms. Most times the culprit is overcrowding, and the solution is to divide those bulbs. Properly dividing the bulbs will reduce the overcrowding and allow the remaining bulbs to bloom for vibrantly.

The techniques used to divide bulbs depend on the exact type of bulb to be divided. There are actually five different types of bulb flowers - true bulbs, corms, tubers, rhizomes and tuberous roots. The techniques for dividing each type of bulb vary, so it is important to know which type you are working with. Any good gardening guide will tell you which type of bulb you have, and that information is usually provided when you buy the bulbs as well.

True bulbs

To divide a true bulb, you should begin by carefully separating the original bulb from the smaller bulb growing at its base. When dividing lily bulbs, you should be careful to first remove the outer scales from the basal plate. After the outer scales are removed, the ends of the bulb should be dipped in a rooting hormone, and the bulb should be planted immediately.

Corms

Corms are not true bulbs, and they renew their growth each season through the production of a new corm, and sometimes also small cormels growing on top of the original corm. To divide corms, the gardener should simply separate the healthy new corms, as well as any cormels, from the original corms.

Tubers

As tubers mature, they increase both their size and the number of growing points. However, most tubers do not form distinct increases. Therefore, to divide tubers, a large tuber should be cut into two or more sections, being sure that each section contains at least one growing point.

Rhizomes

The new growth on rhizomes is produced from growth points located at their sides. Rhizomes are divided by breaking the sections apart at the natural divisions between them, being sure that each of the new divisions has at least one growth point on it.

Tuberous roots

A tuberous root will contain several growing points. Some, like daylilies, form separate and distinct plants, which can simply be pulled apart. This type of sectioning is generally done in fall or summer while the plant is still in its growth stage. Other tuberous root plants, such as dahlias, are more difficult to separate. In order to separate more difficult plants like dahlias, you will need to cut the clumps apart so that each root has a growth bud from which to start. With these types of plants, it is best to separate them in early spring, before planting.

Popular Bulbs for the Home Gardener

Gardening with bulbs has many advantages for the gardener. For one thing, most bulb plants are inexpensive, and bulbs are durable out of the ground and hardy in the ground. Shopping for the right bulbs is also easy; simply choosing firm, healthy looking bulbs, and avoiding those that are cracked, dry or soft is a good way to choose the best bulbs for your garden.

There are so many types of bulbs, however, that it can be difficult to find the right ones for your garden. This article presents a brief overview of some of the most popular flower bulbs.

Gladiolus

Gladiolas are among the most popular of all bulb plants, and their distinctive sword shaped leaves and funnel shaped flowers are instantly recognizable to gardeners and non gardeners alike. This striking appearance has made gladiolas a favorite bulb with many gardeners, and they make a fine centerpiece to any garden due to their large size and attractive appearance. The large summer flowering gladiolas can range in height from three feet to a huge six feet, and their variety of colors makes them great for any garden.

Gladiolas are best planted in the spring, but only after the soil has warmed. Gladiolas typically bloom between 65 and 100 days after planting. Many gardeners plant new gladiola bulbs at one or two week intervals over a four to six week period in order to enjoy continuous blooms. Each gladiola bulb should be planted four times as deep as

the bulb is wide, for instance a one inch wide bulb would be planted four inches deep. The spacing of gladiolas should be between four to six inches.

Gladiolas do best in full sunlight and they should be watered regularly during their blooming and growth phase. In much of the country, gladiola bulbs can be left in the ground over the winter months, but many gardeners choose to dig them up and store them during the winter. If you decide to take this approach, it is best to dig them after the leaves have turned yellow. The bulbs should be placed in a single layer and stored in a cool, dry and dark place to dry for two or three weeks. After the bulbs have dried sufficiently they should be stored in nylon stockings or onion sacks and kept in a cool and well ventilated place.

Hemerocallis

Hemerocallis is the scientific name for the daylily, and it is one of the most well known types of bulb plants on the market. Gardeners love the hardy and trouble free nature of the daylily, and their arching and sword shaped leaves provide a striking addition to any garden. Daylily hybrids can grow as tall as six feet and bloom in the spring and summer months. The daylily produces flowers ranging in size from three to eight inches, and they are available in a wide variety of colors. The daylily gets its name from the fact that each of its flowers lasts only a single day, but its buds open on successive days, and this enhances the beauty of the plant.

The daylily is actually a tuberous root variety of bulb, and they are best planted during fall or early spring. Daylilies should be planted between ½ inch and 1 inch deep and space between 2 to 2½ inches apart in the garden. As with other varieties of bulbs, it is important to water daylilies on a regular basis during their growing season.

Flowering bulbs are among the most popular of all ornamental plants, and they have enjoyed striking popularity for many years. Bulbs are renowned for their hardiness, color and variety, and there are enough types of bulbs to please even the most discriminating gardener.

With so many bulbs to choose from, it can be difficult to choose the right ones, so we present here a quick rundown of some of the most popular varieties of bulbs for the garden.

Crocus

Crocus bulbs typically bloom in early spring or in late winter, and they feature tubular shaped flowers ranging in size from 1½" to 3" long. Crocuses come in a rainbow of colors, and they are a staple of many gardens. Other types of crocus, such as the saffron crocus, bloom instead in the fall, and the flowers can rise from the bare ground weeks, or even only days, after the bulbs are planted.

It is important for crocus bulbs to be planted as soon as they become available in the fall. The best way to plant crocus bulbs is two to three inches deep, with a spacing of three or four inches between bulbs. Crocus bulbs should be planted in good quality soil with good drainage, and they should be provided with full sun or partial shade and watered regularly during their growing and blooming seasons.

Dahlia

Dahlias bloom from summer through fall, and they also come in a wide variety of colors, shapes and sizes. The size of dahlia flowers can range from two to twelve inches, and the height of the plants themselves can vary from just under a foot to more than seven feet for certain stake varieties. It is best to plant dahlias after the last frost of the spring, and the roots should be set between four and six inches deep. Tall dahlia varieties should be spaced four or five feet apart, while shorter ones can be spaced from one to one and a half feet apart.

Dahlias should have access to full sun, but in areas where the summers are very hot they may benefit from partial shade as well. It is important to observe a regular watering schedule during the bloom and growth cycles of the dahlia.

Dahlia bulbs can be left in the ground if the winter temperatures do not go below 20 degrees Fahrenheit, but most gardeners prefer instead to dig the dahlia bulbs up at the end of each growing season. To do this, you should wait until the foliage has yellowed, then cut the stalks back to approximately four inches. The clumps of the roots should be permitted to dry in the sun a few hours, then placed in boxes in a single layer and covered up with either sawdust or dry sand. The bulbs should be stored in a cool dry place over the winter and replanted the following spring.

Galanthus Nivalis

The galanthus is more commonly known as the snowdrop, and it is one of the first plants to bloom at the end of the winter. These plants are typically six to eight inches in height, and they feature one bell shaped flower on each side of the stalk. Snowdrops are best suited for colder climates, and the bulbs are best planted in the autumn of the year. The bulbs should be planted from three to four inches deep and about three inches apart. Snowdrops typically do best in full sun or partial shade, and they like regular watering during their blooming and growing cycles.

Understanding Bulb Flowers

Bulbs are among the most interesting, most beautiful and easiest to grow of all flower varieties. Tulip bulbs were once so prized in Holland that it led to one of the best known financial bubbles in history, and even today, tulips are a leading export from that part of the world.

Even though bulbs are not quite so highly prized today as they were in 17th century Holland, they are still loved for their scents, their colors and their shapes, and gardeners love the fact that most bulbs are hardy and easy to grow.

Many of the most popular varieties of flowers are actually grown from bulbs, including tulips, crocuses, daffodils, irises, lilies, daylilies, dahlias and snowdrops.

One thing all bulb based plants have in common is that they grow from structures located under the ground. These underground structures provide the nutrients and energy the plants need to grow.

Even though bulb based plants are collectively known as "bulbs", there are actually five distinct types of bulb plants - the true bulb, the corm, the tuber, the rhizome and the tuberous root. This article will provide examples of each type.

The True Bulb

The true bulb is in reality an underground stem base containing an embryonic plant. The embryonic plant contained within the stem base already contains the leaves, stems and flower buds, all ready to burst forth once optimal growing conditions are provided. This setup allows the plant to lie dormant during adverse conditions, and thus to survive droughts and other environmental challenges.

The embryonic plant contained within the stem base is surrounded by scales (modified leaves that overlap in a manner reminiscent of reptile or fish scales). At the bottom of the bulb is a basal plate; this basal plate holds the scales together and produces the roots of the plant.

Examples of true bulbs are such popular flower varieties as daffodils, tulips and lilies. True bulb varieties of plants are susceptible to dryness and must be handled carefully. When properly cared for, however, individual bulbs can live for many years without being planted.

The Corm

A corm, like a true bulb, also contains a stem base, but the tissue of the base is solid, and it lacks the scales seen in true bulbs. The roots grow from a basal plate which is located at the bottom of the corm, and the growth point is located at the top of the corm.

Popular types of corms include gladiolas and crocus. Each corm lasts for a single season, and as the corm shrinks away after blooming, a new corm forms on top of it. In addition, small increases, called cormels, are produced around the base of the corm's basal plate.

The Tuber

Like corm and true bulbs, a tuber is actually an underground stem base. Unlike corms and a true bulbs, however, the tuber does not contain a basal plate. Instead, the roots of the tuber grow from both the base and from the sides. A tuber will have multiple growth points spread out over its top surface.

The Rhizome

The rhizome is actually a thickened stem that grows either partly or completely underneath the ground. The largest growth point on a rhizome is located at one end, and additional growth points are located along the sides. The most well known rhizome is the bearded iris.

Tuberous Roots

Unlike other types of bulbs, which are actually specially adapted stems, the tuberous root is not a true root. Instead, fibrous roots designed to absorb nutrients and water grow from the sides and the tip of the tuberous root. Most tuberous roots grow in a cluster, and swollen tuberous parts radiate out from a centralized point. The growth points of a tuberous root are found on the bases of the old stems and not on the roots themselves. Dahlias and daylilies are the best known examples of tuberous roots.

The Most Well Known Bulbs - Daffodils and Tulips

Bulbs are among the most popular of all flowering plants for the garden. Bulbs have long been renowned for their beauty, their hardiness and their variety. This article provides a small sampling of the many types of bulb plants available to the average gardener.

Muscari Armeniacum

The muscari, or grape hyacinth, is one of the most popular of all bulb varieties, and it has been for many years. The grape hyacinth features narrow, grassy leaves that appear in the fall and can survive through the cold and snow of winter. The leaves of the grape hyacinth are small, urn shaped and blue in color, and they grow on attractive eight inch tall spikes. The flowers on the grape hyacinth bloom in the spring of the year, and these bulbs should be planted in the fall in order to bloom the spring. The bulbs of the grape hyacinth should be planted two inches deep and three inches apart for best results. The grape hyacinth prefers full sun or light shade, and it benefits from regular watering during its growth and bloom cycles.

Daffodil

The daffodil may be the most easily recognizable of all bulb plants, and it rewards its gardener with a generous display of beautiful blooms. Besides the traditional white and yellow varieties, daffodils also come in shades of orange, apricot, pink and cream. Daffodil bulbs should be planted twice as deep as they are tall, and they should be spaced between six and eight inches apart. Daffodils benefit from full sun and regular watering during their growth and bloom periods.

Tulip

Tulips may just be the most well known and easily recognized of all bulb plants. Indeed, in the minds of many tulips are synonymous with bulb plants. The tulip has long been prized for its beauty, and tulips continue to be one of the most popular types of flowers among casual gardeners and professional growers alike.

In addition, tulips are among the most hybridized of all flowers, with hybrids available in a staggering array of shapes, sizes, colors and textures. Some of the most popular tulip hybrids include pastels, spotted tulips, bicolor tulips and tricolor tulips. There are also hybrids in the brightest hues, and even a variety that is almost black in color. The tulip

comes in a variety of shapes as well. In addition to the classic egg shaped bloom, there are varieties with blossoms resembling the shapes of peonies and lilies.

The blooming season for most varieties of tulips runs from mid to late spring. Most tulips need a period of extended cold in order to look and bloom their best. Feeding with a high quality, nitrogen rich fertilizer will encourage multiple blooming. The fertilizer should be applied before the first bloom for best results.

In mild climates, it is best to refrigerate tulip bulbs for six weeks before they are planted. While it is possible for tulip bulbs to remain in the ground, most gardeners treat them as annuals and replant them each year. Doing so is often the best way to get the best blooms year after year.

Tulips like full sun, and they benefit from a regular watering schedule during their growing and blooming periods. It is best to plant tulip bulbs in the fall, and tulip bulbs should be planted three times as deep as the bulb is wide. Therefore, a 2" wide bulb would be planted 6" deep. It is important to leave sufficient space between the planted bulbs as well, from four to eight inches depending on the size of the bulb.

Gardening with Bulbs – Part 1

Bulbs have been among the most popular types of flowers for many, many years. Tulip bulbs were once so popular in Holland that a single bulb was worth more than an entire herd of cows, and Tulip mania as it was popularly called, is widely seen to be the first example of a market bubble.

Even if bulbs are not quite so popular these days, bulbs are still among the most popular, beautiful and useful of all plants for the home gardener. Bulbs are renowned for their hardiness and for their ability to rebloom season after season. In addition, most bulb flowers are very easy to grow and very inexpensive to buy. With all these advantages, it is easy to see why bulbs are so popular with all kinds of gardeners.

Another advantage of bulbs is that it is usually easy to choose the healthiest bulbs. The best way to choose healthy bulbs is to choose the firmest, largest bulbs you can find. Firm bulbs are generally very healthy bulbs, and large bulbs typically produce the largest and best blooming flowers.

Unhealthy bulbs are generally very easy to spot as well. Bulbs that are very light, cracked or soft should be avoided. Many bulbs are susceptible to rot, and a soft bulb may be showing signs of rot. In addition, a lightweight or shriveled looking bulb may be unable to bloom. A good, healthy bulb will be surprisingly heavy for its size, so it is important to handle the bulbs to choose the best ones.

Most types of bulbs should be planted in the fall of the year, but it is important to get planting instructions when you buy your bulbs. Some bulbs bloom in the fall of the year, and they are usually planted in the springtime instead.

When planting bulbs in the fall, they should be planted around early to mid October. The goal is to have the bulbs in the ground around six weeks prior to the time the ground starts to freeze. This means that the optimum time for planting bulbs will vary according to your own location.

It is important to plant bulbs in a soil that has been properly prepared. The depth the bulbs should be planted will vary from variety to variety, so again it is important to get planting instructions if you are unfamiliar with the needs of the bulb. For instance, crocus bulbs should be planted four inches deep, while daffodils and hyacinths need to be planted to a depth of six inches. Tulips should be planted even deeper, to a depth of about eight inches.

One great tool to have on hand when working with bulbs is the bulb planter. A bulb planter is a great way to dig consistent size holes when planting a row of bulbs, and a bulb planter is also a great way to keep your rows uniform.

Gardeners who want a more wild and natural look to their bulb garden often prefer to dig a trench to the appropriate depth and simply lay the bulbs in. This approach can provide a unique, if somewhat unpredictable, look when the bulbs begin to emerge.

When you plant your bulbs, it is a good idea to lay a small amount of fertilizer in the bottom of each hole, then cover that fertilizer with a layer of soil. The fertilizer provides much needed nutrients for the bulb to start its growth, but it is important that the bulb not make direct contact with the fertilizer, since this could potentially cause the bulb to be burned.

Bulbs should always be planted with the pointed end sticking up and the flat side pointing down, directly on top of the layer of soil covering the fertilizer. After the bulbs have been planted, they should be covered with more soil and provided with a good, thorough watering.

Gardening with Bulbs – Part 2

Bulbs are among the most popular of all flowering plants, due to their hardiness, low price and beauty. It is hard to beat the color variety of a garden bed full of bulbs, and planting bulbs that bloom in different seasons can guarantee a season full of beautiful flowers.

This section focuses on a few of the most popular varieties of bulbs. Some of the most popular bulb varieties available to the home gardener include:

Hyacinths (Dutch Hyacinth)

The Dutch hyacinth is one of the most instantly recognizable, and most popular, of all the varieties of bulb plants. The Dutch hyacinth blooms in the spring and features the well known foot high spires with their small bell shaped and very fragrant flowers. Hyacinths come in a wide varieties of colors, including red, pink, buff, white, blue and purple. The Dutch hyacinth grows best in colder areas, and it can last from year to year. In these cold water climates, the hyacinth is best planted in September or October.

IN areas where the weather is milder, hyacinth bulbs will not last from one year to the next. In these more temperate areas, hyacinths are best treated as an annual and replanted each year, preferably in October, November or December. It is best to plant hyacinth bulbs four to five inches deep, and to space them from four to five inches apart as well. Hyacinths grow best in full sunlight, and they benefit from regular watering, especially during their blooming and growth periods.

Iris

The most frequently seen variety of irises are the bearded varieties. Bearded irises are striking plants, and they appear in a dazzling array of colors and combinations of colors. Irises appear in a variety of sizes as well, with very small varieties and very large ones as well.

Irises should be planted in July or August in cold climates and in September or October in warmer areas. Irises are actually rhizomes, and they should be spaced from one to two feet apart, with the tops placed right below the surface of the soil. Irises grow best in full sunlight or light shade, and they benefit from a regular watering schedule during their growing season.

Lilium

The lillium is the scientific name given to the Asiatic and oriental hybrid lily, and they are very popular bulb plants. These Asiatic lilies bloom early in the summer, and they range in height from a mere six inches to a towering 4½ feet. These lilies feature blossoms ranging in size from four to six inches and in colors like white, yellow, orange, pink and red.

Oriental lilies bloom later in the year, usually in midsummer or early autumn. Oriental lilies have stems from two to ix feet in height, and they feature large and fragrant flowers up to nine inches in length. These beautiful flowers feature pink and white petals with stripes and speckles, and they provide a striking addition to any garden.

Lilly bulbs should be planted as quickly as possible after they are bought, since these particular bulbs do not keep well. If it is necessary to delay planting, the bulbs should be stored in a cool place. It is important to examine the bulbs carefully before they are planted, and any shriveled bulbs should be placed in peat moss or moist sand until they have recovered.

Asiatic and oriental lily bulbs are best planted spaced about a foot apart. Smaller bulbs should be covered with a layer of soil two to three inches thick, which medium sized

bulbs need a layer of three to four inches and large bulbs should be covered with four to six inches of soil.

The most commonly seen problem encountered when growing bulbs is a viral infection, and unfortunately that infection is incurable. The best way to avoid infection is to buy only the healthiest bulbs from the best sources. Any lilies showing mottled or very stunted leaves should be destroyed.

Lilies tend to do best in full sun or partial shade, and like other bulbs they benefit from regular watering during their growth and blooming phases.

Buying and Planting Bulbs the Right Way

There are many varieties of flowering plants, but few offer all the advantages of bulb plants. For starters, bulbs are generally inexpensive to buy, and they can be purchased through the mail or over the internet, since they are durable and easy to ship.

Bulbs are also beautiful, and some of the most beloved flowers in the garden, such as hyacinths, daffodils and of course tulips, are bulb plants. In addition, many bulbs can remain in the ground through the winter and bloom the next year.

Even though bulbs are among the hardiest of all plants, it is important to exercise caution when planting them, and to buy only the best and most healthy bulbs. By choosing the healthiest bulbs, it will be easy to create a beautiful and healthy garden year after year.

When shopping for bulbs, it is important to look for the firmest, plumpest bulbs you can find. A good, high quality bulb will seem surprisingly heavy for its size. It is important to avoid bulbs that are too soft, since softness is often a sign of bulb rot. In addition, bulbs that are very light in weight, or that appear shriveled or cracked, should be rejected. These bulbs may have lost too much of their moisture to bloom in the garden.

The best blooms are generally provided by the largest bulbs. For instance, the largest daffodil bulbs will generally provide the biggest daffodils, and the biggest tulip bulbs will produce the largest tulips. Since bulbs bloom again and again, however, a most cost effective approach for the patient gardener is to buy small bulbs and allow them to grow over time. Each bloom will be larger than the last, and letting your own small bulbs grow can be a real treat for the gardener.

After you have bought the best bulbs you can find, it is important to exercise care when planting them. In order to thrive and grow, bulbs should be provided with a good well drained flower bed. If you have a poor draining soil, you may want to plant them on a slope or used a raised bed for better drainage.

Many people like to prepare an entire bed only for bulbs, while others prefer to intersperse their bulbs with other kinds of plants. Either approach can be great, but it is important to do the planting properly. To plant an entire bed of bulbs, you should first remove weeds and other vegetation from the bed. You should then spread between one and three inches of organic matter over the soil, then put down a small amount of a high quality fertilizer. When using fertilizer, it is important to follow the instructions on the package. After you have tilled and raked the soil, it is time to plant the bulbs.

Most bulbs should be planted three times as deep as the bulb is wide, so the average two inch wide bulb should be planted to a depth of about six inches. In sandy soils or hot climates, the bulbs should be planted a little bit deeper, while in heavy soil they should be planted a bit shallower. While it is fine to space bulbs close together, the more closely spaced the bulbs the more need there will be to divide them in a few years.

Using a bulb planter is a great idea when planting bulbs. If you do not have a bulb planter handy, you can use a garden trowel to dig the holes. Each hole should be dug a few inches deeper than needed, and a tablespoon of fertilizer should be placed in the base of each hole. The fertilizer should then be covered with a thin layer of soil, on top of which the bulb should be placed. The rest of the hole should then be filled with soil.

After planting the bulbs, you should be sure to water the bed thoroughly in order to get them off to a good start. Proper moisture at the start will allow them to establish a healthy root system.

Caring for Your Bulbs Properly

Bulbs are generally among the easiest of all plants to care for, and this hardiness makes bulbs one of the most popular among all kinds of gardeners. Even though bulbs are easy to care for, however, it is still important to care for them properly to ensure you will have a garden full of dahlias, lilies, daffodils, tulips and other bulbs.

One great thing about bulbs is the colors they come in. Bulb plants come in a wide variety of colors, and a flower bed full of bulbs can be one of the most colorful parts of any garden.

As with any type of plant, it is important that your bed full of bulbs receive plenty of water, plenty of sunlight, proper fertilization and a good quality soil. Providing these basic elements is the best way to get your bulbs off to the best start.

When it comes to watering bulbs, it is important to remember that all bulbs need regular watering during their growth and blooming period. For most bulbs, the active growth period begins shortly after they go into the ground, and it continues until the foliage on the plant has died back. The die back generally occurs after the flowering has stopped, or in the autumn of the year.

If there is not enough rainfall available, the gardener should be sure to supplement the water with deep watering, deep enough to reach the root zone, as the roots will be growing underneath the bulb. In addition, providing a good layer of mulch will assist the roots in retaining their all important moisture content. It is important to note here, however, that the bearded iris should never be mulched, since mulching it will cause it to rot.

Proper fertilization is also very important to successfully growing bulbs. The fertilizer should be applied at the time the bulb is planted, in the bottom of the hole, and covered with a thin layer of soil. The bulb should never be placed directly on top of the fertilizer. In addition, the bulbs should be fed with a high nitrogen content fertilizer at the start of the growing season. Providing this extra feeding will help the bulbs to produce more attractive flowers.

After the bulbs have completed their blooming cycle, they will have used up a great deal of their nutrient content. For the bulb to do well the following season it is important for those nutrients to be replenished. There are two steps gardeners should take to ensure that their bulbs will bloom well the next year.

The first step is to be certain that the foliage is left on the plant, even if the foliage looks poor, until the foliage has yellowed and pulls off easily. That is because the leaves will continue to make food for the plant as long as they are green, and this food will help the plant bloom better the next year.

The second step is to provide a good quality fertilizer right after the flowers have begun to fade away. It is important to fertilize with a bulb food which is high in phosphorus and potassium, as this will help the plant thrive the next year.

In order to be their most effective, the phosphorus and potassium in the bulb food must be able to reach the root zone, and for this reason the fertilizer should be placed as close as possible to the roots. For a planting that has already been established, the fertilizer should be stretched slightly into the soil to help it move deeper, and the feeding should be followed by a deep watering.

Enhance your Garden with Fall Bulbs

The coming of autumn does not have to mean hanging up your garden shears and garden gloves for the year. The fall of the year is actually the time when many of the most popular bulbs bloom, and planting fall bulbs can provide your garden with much needed color almost until the moment the first snow falls.

The fall of the year is also one of the most pleasant times to work in your garden, since the heat of summer has passed. Many gardeners love spending the late summer and autumn days working in their garden.

In addition, fall bulbs are a great investment for the home gardener. After all, the great thing about bulbs is that they are able to remain in the ground, ready to spring forth when their optimal growing conditions are met. Even when they are not growing and blooming, the bulbs are still there, readying themselves for the next season.

When planting fall bulbs, one of the most important considerations is finding a suitable location for them. Even though bulbs are very hardy, specific bulbs have their own requirements, and those special requirements must be met in order for the bulbs to thrive and show their best blooms. The soil is probably the most important consideration. Bulbs always do best in a well drained soil, and when bulbs fail to grow it is usually because they have rotted due to overly wet soil.

Most bulb varieties grow best in full sunlight, and it is also important to properly prepare the planting bed. Many experienced gardeners prefer to excavate the area to a depth of between 12 and 15 inches, and then lay down a layer of well aged manure or compost. After this layer is put down, the bulbs are spaced properly, then covered with either the original soil or with a good quality compost or potting soil.

While this method is a great way to plant bulbs, it is also a very time consuming one. If you are looking for a less item consuming method of planting fall bulbs, you can use a bulb planter to make three to four inch wide holes. To use a bulb planter, you simply use a twisting motion. After the proper depth has been reached, the bulb planter is removed and the bulb can be planted. Even though bulb planters are a real time saver for most gardeners, they do not perform well where the soil is rocky.

The most popular types of bulbs to plant in the fall season are tulips, daffodils and crocus. In addition to these well known varieties, however, there are a number of other choices as well, including hyacinths, iris and alliums. These types of bulbs are easy to grow and they bloom beautifully. The chionodoxa is another popular fall bulb, and even though its earliest blooms are only a few inches in height, as it matures its blooms become ever larger. In addition, chionodoxa are resistant to deer, so they are favored by gardeners whose gardens are often visited by these creatures.

Fall Blooming Flowers

To many people, fall is the time of year when the gardening season is drawing to a close, and it is time to close the flower bed and prepare for winter. Even though most gardeners are ready to hang up their garden tools and get ready for the next season, gardeners can continue to enjoy the beauty of the fall season, since there are a number of beautiful flowers blooming all through the autumn of the year.

There are many fall bulbs available to the average gardener, and it is important to choose the right ones. When initially planting the bulbs, it is important to take care to choose the best location within the garden. It is important to choose a location where the delicate fall bulbs will not be overshadowed by larger plants or hidden in with the surrounding ground cover.

One advantage of fall bulbs, however, is that they are hardy. After they have been in the ground a few years, these bulbs will be able to take their rightful place and thrive in any garden setting.

One of the most frequently seen of all fall bulbs is the hardy cyclamens (*Cyclamen Hederifolium*). These bulbs are able to come back year after year, and they have been known to last for a decade or even more. In addition, the hardy cyclamen produces breathtaking blooms, and it is generally a very undemanding plant.

Other than a good quality soil, sufficient water and ample sunlight, the cyclamen needs little in order to bloom year after year. Each small cyclamen bloom has a soft pink petal that is complimented by an eye of darker pink. These small blooms are tiny version of the larger cyclamen that is often seen at Christmastime. In the home garden, the hardy cyclamen often blooms into November.

Another popular autumn flower is the colchicum. These flowers usually bloom in the middle of September, and they are similar in appearance to crocuses but generally much larger. Most colchicums seen in the garden are hybrids of either *C. Autumnale* or *C. Speciosum*. There are some subtle differences between these two common varieties, and their blossoms come in shades of rose and violet. The sizes of colchicums vary from 10 to 12 inches. While these flowers can be used in many settings, they are a particularly beautiful way to accent a rock garden.

Autumn daffodils are another popular fall flower, and they can provide a beautiful touch of color for the garden. It is important to plant fall daffodils in a well drained flower bed and to provide them with plenty of sunlight. It is also important to avoid planting autumn daffodils in areas where moisture pools, as excessive moisture could damage the bulbs. Autumn daffodils often bloom at the same time as the colchicum, and the two can provide a striking color palette.

The First Flowers of Spring

One of the most thrilling sights for any gardener, from the newest to the most experienced, is the first spring flowers peeking up through the last snow of winter. Spring flowers have long been seen as a sign of new life, and gardeners certainly enjoy seeing these beautiful harbingers of warmer weather.

Whether it is the tiny, delicate blossoms of the snowdrop, the delicate petals of the crocus or the subtle beauty of the Iris reticulata, it is hard to beat the beauty of spring flowers. These first delicate blossoms of spring are a sign that the long days of winter are finally over, and that it is time to look forward to warmer weather. Even the most jaded gardeners continue to be excited by the sight of the earliest blossoms making their way through the last snow of winter.

The well named snowdrop is one of the most beloved, and most popular types of flowers for early spring. These delicate blossoms are breathtaking to behold. The common snowdrop, scientific name *Galanthus nivalis*, features small, delicate blossoms, while the giant snowdrop, known to scientists as the *Galanthus elwesii*, features striking large early spring blooms.

The Iris reticulata is another favorite early spring bloom. This bulb is one of the most striking flowers in the world of gardening, and it is highly prized for its beauty. The Iris reticulata originally came from the high mountain areas of Western Asia, and it does well in cold climates. The Iris reticulata does best in a well drained bed containing coarse sand or grit.

When caring for an Iris reticulata, it is important not to over water the plant, since this can cause severe damage to the bulb. This plant comes in a wide variety of colors, ranging from a pale amethyst to a deep, dark purple. In addition, the Iris reticulata has been thoroughly hybridized, and a wide variety of hybrid colors, including solids, speckles, stripes and splotches are available as well.

In addition to these somewhat common early spring blooms, there are rarer varieties as well. One of the rarest of late winter and early spring bulbs is the Adonis vernalis. The Adonis appears to be a delicate plant, but it is able to make its way through the snows of late winter to provide a beautiful bloom in March. The Adonis has a beautiful yellow bloom, and it makes a wonderful companion to any landscape. The Adonis can be used anywhere, but it makes a particularly good addition to a winter rock garden.

No matter which types of late winter or early spring blooming flowers you choose, you will be rewarded with beautiful color in your garden as the last days of winter give way to the first days of spring.

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