

COLORBLENDS®

WHOLESALE FLOWER BULBS

Planting & Care Instructions

Upon Arrival

- **Open all boxes and crates** and remove the bags of bulbs so air can get to them. As you take the bags from the packages, check them against the packing list.
- **Plant as soon as possible.** Unless you specified a particular delivery week, your bulbs have been shipped at the appropriate time for planting in your area. Get them in the ground as soon as you can.
- **If you can't plant right away,** you can keep the bulbs for a week or two in a dry, cool place with good air circulation. Temperatures between 50° and 60°F are ideal, but your bulbs should be fine within a range of 35°–75°F.

Important: Bulbs must be planted this fall

Choosing a Site

There are two key considerations when choosing a site for bulbs.

- 1: Sunlight.** Most bulbs need ample sunshine to bloom well next spring and to store up the energy required to flower in future springs. Some bulbs – including crocuses and scillas – can be planted beneath deciduous trees; these bulbs are able to satisfy most of their light needs before the trees leaf out. (Specific requirements are provided in this pamphlet for each kind of bulb we offer.)
- 2: Drainage.** All bulbs need good drainage; never plant bulbs where water collects. The drainage of heavy clay soils can be improved by digging in organic matter such as compost or composted manure.

Planting

There are two principal ways of planting bulbs.

- 1: Planting a bed.** Excavate the area to be planted and loosen the soil in the bottom. Set the bulbs in the bed. Replace the soil (gently at first, to avoid knocking the bulbs out of position). If the soil is dry, water thoroughly.
- 2: Planting bulbs individually.** Dig a hole with a trowel, auger or bulb planter. Drop the bulb (or bulbs – small bulbs such as those of *eranthis* and *anemones* can be planted in threes, fours or more) into the hole. Replace the soil. If the soil is dry, water thoroughly after planting.

Note: Don't worry too much about which end is up on a bulb. Bulbs know to send shoots up and roots down. They will grow and bloom even if you plant them upside down.

Watering

Bulbs need ample moisture from fall, when they make new roots, until they finish flowering in spring. If the soil is dry at planting time, water thoroughly after planting. Thereafter water only if rainfall is scarce. Stop watering after the bulbs bloom. Supplemental irrigation after bloom – especially in the Deep South – may cause bulbs to rot.

Fertilizing

The bulbs we ship already have next year's flowers set inside them, so there's no need to fertilize at planting time. If you intend for your bulbs to be long-term players in your landscape, you may want to fertilize them in early spring, when the shoots begin to push through the soil. We suggest that you have your soil tested first to identify any nutrient deficiencies and that you correct those deficiencies with an organic fertilizer, which will release nutrients slowly. Most bulbs are not heavy feeders. You can generally do without fertilizer entirely if you mulch your bulbs with 2–3 inches of an organic material such as compost, shredded bark, aged wood chips, pine straw or shredded leaves, and freshen it annually.

Note: If you use mulch, you can reduce the planting depth for your bulbs. The denser the mulch, the greater the reduction, but as a rule of thumb, 2 inches of mulch is equivalent to 1 inch of soil.


Caring for Your Bulbs After They Bloom

After your bulbs bloom, you may remove the spent flowers or seed heads if they are unsightly. In the case of tulips, removing the seed heads may also help to encourage the bulbs to flower again the following year. Do NOT cut the leaves. You must allow the foliage to die back naturally (spring-flowering bulbs go dormant in summer, reappearing the following spring). If you cut, braid or tie up the foliage before it yellows and withers, you prevent the bulbs from storing up the energy they will need to grow and bloom again the following year. Of course, if you intend to lift and discard bulbs after they bloom and plant new bulbs in the fall, there's no need to wait for the foliage to yellow.


Bulb growth cycle




Illustration: Bobbi Angell

Alliums	Sun: 
Planting depth: see bag label	Spacing: see bag label



Plant in full sun or light shade and well-drained soil. Sandy soil is ideal. Allium leaves begin to yellow by the time the flowers open. You can disguise the foliage by planting large alliums behind or among bushy perennials or shrubs, and small alliums among low-growing perennials. The flower heads of Globemaster and Christophii remain attractive for a time even after the color drains away. They can be left in the garden or cut and dried for use in indoor arrangements.

Anemone (windflowers)	Sun: 
Planting depth: 2"	Spacing: 2" apart



Prefers dappled shade in most climates; will tolerate full sun in northern regions. Grows best in soil that has been loosened before planting. It's hard to tell top from bottom on anemone tubers, but it doesn't matter which end is up: The tubers know to send shoots up and roots down. To speed planting, you can put several tubers in a single planting hole.

Camassia	Sun: 
Planting depth: 6"	Spacing: 5" apart

Plant in full sun or light shade and evenly moist soil. Camassias are among the few bulbs that thrive in damp, or even wet, soil. Foliage is slow to die back in summer; do not cut before it has completely yellowed and collapsed.


Chionodoxa (glory of the snow)	Sun:  
Planting depth: 3"	Spacing: 2" apart

Full sun or partial shade. Well-drained soil that is not too dry. If left undisturbed, the bulbs may seed themselves about, eventually forming a thick lavender-blue carpet in spring. Chionodoxa can be naturalized in a lawn if you're willing to hold off on mowing until the seed is dispersed and the foliage begins to yellow.


Crocuses	Sun:  
Planting depth: 3"	Spacing: see bag label

Plant in full sun or partial shade and well-drained soil. For earliest bloom, put crocuses in a sunny, protected location – against the south-facing foundation of a house, for example. Can be planted in a lawn if you're willing to hold off on mowing until the foliage begins to yellow.


Daffodils (see Narcissus, page 6)
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Eranthis (winter wolf's bane, winter aconite)	Sun: 
Planting depth: 2"	Spacing: 2" apart


Best in dappled sunlight and well-drained soil that does not dry out entirely in summer. It's hard to tell top from bottom on eranthis tubers, but it doesn't matter which end is up: The tubers know to send shoots up and roots down. To speed planting, you can put several tubers in a single planting hole. If left undisturbed, eranthis may seed itself about, eventually forming a carpet of bright yellow in early spring.

Erythronium (trout lily)	Sun: 
Planting depth: 4"	Spacing: 5" apart


Plant in partial shade and evenly moist, woody soil. To simulate woody soil, dig plenty of compost or leaf mold into your soil before planting. Mulch after planting or in spring with compost or shredded leaves to maintain that woody quality.

Fritillaria imperialis (crown imperial)	Sun: 
Planting depth: 6"	Spacing: 8" apart

Full sun or light shade. Fertile, deeply dug, evenly moist soil. Amend sandy soil with plenty of compost or leaf mold. These fritillarias are heavy feeders that benefit from a mulch of composted manure or leaf mold in the fall or a dusting of bulb fertilizer in early spring.

Fritillaria meleagris (snake's head)	Sun: 
Planting depth: 4"	Spacing: 3" apart

Best in partial shade (will tolerate full sun in northern regions) and evenly moist soil that doesn't dry out in summer. This fritillaria can be planted in rough grassy areas, where it looks very natural. Just be sure you wait to mow until the foliage begins to yellow.

Galanthus (snowdrops)	Sun: 
Planting depth: 3"	Spacing: 3" apart

Plant in partial shade (will tolerate full sun in northern regions) and loose, rich, evenly moist soil. Established bulbs may produce leaves in late fall or early winter but generally wait to flower until the first hint of warmth in early spring. If you want to relocate snowdrops or divide a clump, the best time to do it is just after bloom, while the leaves are still green.

Note: Snowdrops suffer from prolonged periods of dry storage; we urge you to get them into the ground as soon as you receive them.

Hyacinthoides (Spanish bluebells)	Sun: ☀️ 🌑
Planting depth: 4"	Spacing: 4" apart

Adaptable bulbs that grow in full sun or shade (as long as it's not too dense) and in any well-drained soil that does not dry out completely in summer. In the wild, they grow on the woodland floor, forming dense colonies in the high shade of deciduous trees. The same effect can be had in the landscape if the seeds are allowed to ripen and fall at their parents' feet.

Hyacinths	Sun: ☀️
Planting depth: 5"	Spacing: 5" apart

Hyacinths need at least a half day of sun to flower well and store up enough energy for the following spring's display. They grow in any well-drained soil. The flower heads are at their largest and fullest the first spring after planting; in subsequent years the flowers tend to be more loose and informal.

Note: Hyacinth bulbs can irritate your skin. Wear gloves when handling and plan on showering soon after planting.

Ipheion (starflower)	Sun: ☀️ 🌑
Planting depth: 2"	Spacing: 2" apart

Plant in full sun or partial shade and well-drained soil. It's not unusual for the foliage of bulbs planted in a prior year to re-emerge in fall. The flowers will open on schedule the following spring.



Iris	Sun: ☀️
Planting depth: 3"	Spacing: 2" apart

Iris reticulata requires well-drained soil and full sun, and it likes to be dry in summer. After bloom, the narrow, grasslike foliage begins to elongate, eventually standing 12-14" tall. It collapses and disappears by early summer.



Save your labels!

We suggest you save a bag label for each variety you plant. You can make notes in pen or pencil on the back. When the bulbs start coming up in spring, you'll have a record of what you planted and where.




Leucojum (snowflakes)	Sun:  
Planting depth: 6"	Spacing: 5" apart

Full sun or partial shade and soil that does not dry out entirely in summer. In the wild, snowflakes are found in damp meadows and on river banks, so they are a good choice for a spot where the soil is less than perfectly drained. Bulbs are slow to go dormant in summer; wait to cut back until the leaves have yellowed.

Muscari (grape hyacinths)	Sun:  
Planting depth: 3"	Spacing: 2" apart

These bulbs thrive in full sun or partial shade and any well-drained soil. *Muscari armeniacum* bulbs planted in a prior year often produce tufts of grasslike foliage in fall, which has the benefit of reminding you where they are when you are planting additional bulbs. They will bloom on schedule the following spring.

Note: Do not be concerned if you see blue mold on your muscari bulbs. Go ahead and plant them. The mold will not affect their performance.

Narcissus (daffodils, jonquils)	Sun: 
Planting depth: see bag label	Spacing: see bag label




To get the most from daffodils, follow these 4 basic rules:

- 1: Plant them where they will get at least 6 hours of direct sunlight,** even after they have finished flowering and the trees have leafed out. Daffodils need lots of sun after they bloom to produce next year's flowers.
- 2: Plant them in soil that drains well.** Avoid areas where water stands after a rain storm.
- 3: Fertilize very lightly with a low-nitrogen fertilizer,** preferably organic, just as the shoots emerge from the ground in early spring.
- 4: After daffodils flower, wait at least 8 weeks – until the leaves turn yellow – before cutting them.** Never tie or braid daffodil foliage. This year's leaves = next year's flowers.


If you want to naturalize daffodils (i.e., plant them so that they look as though they had sprung up on their own), we suggest that you set them out in drifts (not in blocks or lines) and that you space the bulbs farther apart than recommended on the bag label (to allow room for the clumps to increase in size). If you want to naturalize daffodils in a grassy area, you must wait to mow until their foliage has turned yellow, which means allowing the grass to grow very tall.

Puschkinia (striped squill)	Sun:  
Planting depth: 3"	Spacing: 2" apart

Undemanding bulbs that are happy either in full sun or partial shade. All they require is well-drained soil.

Scilla (blue and white squill)	Sun:   
Planting depth: 3"	Spacing: see bag label

Full sun or partial shade. Well-drained soil. Blue squill can self-sow with abandon: If left undisturbed, a handful of bulbs may eventually become a thick, brilliant blue carpet in spring. Can be naturalized in a lawn if you're willing to hold off on mowing until the seed capsules open and the foliage begins to yellow.

Tulips	Sun: 
Planting depth: see bag label	Spacing: see bag label

Tulips perform best in full sun but will tolerate a bit of shade (some afternoon shade will prolong flower life, especially in the South). They require well-drained soil. Treat tulips as annuals if you want a perfect display: After they flower, lift and discard the bulbs and replant fresh ones in the fall. In a less formal situation, you can leave the bulbs in place. The flowers will be uneven in size and height and generally much fewer in number, but that can have its own charm.

To encourage tulips to bloom again in future years we recommend that you:

- 1: Fertilize the bulbs** when the foliage pushes through the soil in early spring. Don't overdo it. A light scattering of a low-nitrogen fertilizer, preferably organic, is enough.
- 2: Remove the spent flowers** as soon as the bulbs finish blooming. Snapping off the top 3 inches of the flower stem prevents seed formation and focuses energy instead on bulb growth.
- 3: Allow the foliage to wither completely** before you remove it.
- 4: Avoid summer irrigation.** Tulips prefer to be dry during their dormancy.

Indoor Bulbs

Amaryllis

Plant each bulb in a 7- or 8-inch pot (bulbs may also be clustered in a larger pot). A terra-cotta pot is a good choice because it helps to counterbalance the weight of the flowers. Use any commercial potting mix (available at garden centers and home stores). Plant so that the top one-third to one-half of the bulb is ABOVE the level of the potting mix. Water thoroughly after planting and set the pot in a sunny window (south- or west-facing is best). Room temperature (60°-75°F) is ideal – the warmer the room the faster the bulb will grow.

Water sparingly until growth is clearly under way, then water thoroughly whenever the surface of the potting mix is dry to the touch. Turn the pot daily to promote balanced growth (the stems will lean toward the window). In the average home, flowers will appear 8-12 weeks after planting (Rapido may flower in as little as 5 weeks after planting). Bloom can be prolonged by moving the bulb to a cool location at night.

It is possible to get your amaryllis to flower again the following winter. As the flowers on each stem fade, cut the stem off 2 inches above the top of the bulb. Do

NOT cut the leaves. Continue to water as needed and begin fertilizing monthly with a water-soluble houseplant fertilizer (mixed as directed). After the danger of frost has passed in spring, set the pot outdoors in a shady location. Over the course of a week or so, gradually increase the bulb's exposure to sunlight. The bulb needs lots of sun (ideally more than six hours a day in northern regions) to store up the energy it needs to flower.

The bulb can be left in its pot, moved to a larger pot or planted (at the same level) in the ground. Continue to water and fertilize the bulb through summer. In late summer or fall (some gardeners wait until after the first frost), bring the pot indoors (or lift the bulb from the soil) and place it in a cool (50°F is ideal), dry location such as a basement for 8–10 weeks. Then pot the bulb (if necessary) as directed above and put it in a sunny window.

Paperwhites

Paperwhites can be planted in a commercial potting mix in a conventional pot. They can also be planted in pebbles in a bowl or similar container that does not have a drainage hole in the bottom (a clear container allows you to see the water level). The container should be at least 3 inches deep. Fill the pot or container with potting mix or pebbles to within 2 inches of the rim. Set the bulbs very closely (it's OK if they touch). Cover with additional potting mix or pebbles, leaving just the necks exposed. Water thoroughly. If you are planting in pebbles, water with care. The water level should be just below the bottoms of the bulbs. If the bulbs sit in water, they may rot.

Place the container in a cool (50°F is ideal) place such as a closet or basement. Cool temperatures stimulate root growth. If you don't have a cool location, set the container on the floor away from radiators or heat vents. Check the bulbs frequently and water as necessary. Do not let the bulbs dry out.

When the bulbs are firmly rooted and growth begins to show (about 2 weeks after potting), move the container to a sunny window. Water as needed. Paperwhites in active growth can be very thirsty; they may need to be watered every 3–4 days. Rotate the container daily to promote balanced growth (the leaves and stems will lean toward the light). If the plants grow tall and look as though they may topple, support them with twine and stakes. Florist's wire can also be used.

Paperwhites generally bloom 5–6 weeks after planting. You can stagger plantings to keep the color and fragrance coming. Store unplanted bulbs in a cool (but not freezing) location.

Paperwhites are frost tender, and it's difficult to get them to flower well again indoors. We suggest that you discard the bulbs after they bloom.

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