



How to grow
Spring Bulbs

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Thank you for buying your spring bulbs from us here at Marshalls Garden.

We're proud to have such a large range of spring bulbs, with over 240 available including 50 NEW varieties. We work hard with our excellent supplier network to ensure premium grade bulbs are delivered straight to your door.

We recommend an optimum planting time of September to November for planting your bulbs whilst the soil is still warm to give them the best start, however you can still plant in December also. Over the next few pages, we aim to give you all the tips and tricks you need to enjoy a blooming spring.

Happy planting!

The Marshalls Team

Contents

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 4 Allium | 15 Galanthus |
| 5 Anemone | 16 Hyacinth |
| 6 Bluebell | 17 Imperial Fritillaria |
| 7 Camassia | 18 Iris |
| 8 Chionodoxa | 19 Muscari |
| 9 Crocus | 20 Narcissus |
| 10 Cyclamen | 21 Nectaroscordium |
| 11 Eranthis | 22 Tulips |
| 12 Eremurus | 23 Puschkinia and Gladiolus |
| 13 Erythronium | |
| 14 Fritillaria | |

General information on growing spring bulbs



Planting

Bulbs are easy to grow and extremely versatile, coming back year after year. Storing their energy over the winter, they spring into life as winter draws to a close and look great in borders, filling in the gaps before your perennials and shrubs start to spring into action again, as well as in your lawn for a naturalising effect. If you've a smaller space, bulbs also make great container displays for a balcony or small patio.

They're also very easy to plant:

- Most bulbs and corms love full sun and soil with good drainage. They thrive in soil enriched with organic matter and horticultural grit
- If you are on heavy soil that consists of a lot of clay, mix in about one-third grit to two-thirds soil
- Plant your bulb with the pointed end facing up and flat base in the soil
- The general rule with planting depth is to plant approximately twice the size of the bulb down. There are some exceptions so please see individual instructions in this booklet
- The optimum planting time for spring bulbs is September – November, however December planting is still possible.



How to care for your bulbs

We supply premium grade bulbs from the best growers in the UK. Lifted straight from the ground and delivered straight to your door in a recycled plastic mesh bag, your bulbs should be planted before the cold weather really sets in, ideally no later than November. If you wish to store your bulbs for a few weeks before planting, we recommend storing them in labelled nets or paper bags in a dry, dark frost-free environment until you're ready to plant.



Your bulbs on delivery

When we send you your order, you'll find they fall into different types:

Bulbs (e.g. Narcissus and Tulip): Have a typical bulb shape, similar to an onion with fleshy scales and the underside showing visible roots from its basal plate.

Corms (e.g. Crocus): A mass of solid tissue with a fleshy stem that is round and flat in shape.

Rhizomes (e.g. Iris): A swollen stem bearing leaves and roots, which grows horizontally on or just below the surface.

Please check individual varieties for planting instructions.



Naturalising

By naturalising bulbs, you can mimic nature, whether it be a woodland scene or an idyllic meadow. It simply means that you plant your bulbs as they would grow in the wild. This way of planting is very easy to achieve and is a great way to brighten up your lawn, verge, wooded area, wildflower patch or allotment in spring.

When doing this, it's best to plant in an informal pattern so it looks natural. Bulbs such as Galanthus, Crocus, Muscari, Narcissus and Fritillaria are best for naturalising and easy to establish, creating swathes of colour when planted in large quantities. A naturalising effect is simple to create and will last for many years to come, providing joy season after season.



Allium 'Graceful Beauty'

Allium

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower May – June

Height 30-120cm (12-47in)



Where to plant

Alliums, as members of the onion family love full sun and fertile, well-drained soil.

How to plant in the ground

Alliums are best planted as soon as you receive them whilst the soil and weather are still relatively warm so they will have the chance to produce a few roots, ready for flowering in the spring.

1. Make sure you choose a sunny, well drained spot as allium bulbs will rot if waterlogged.

2. Before planting, treat your soil to some organic matter and a good bulb compost so you're ready for a dramatic display in late spring.
3. Loosen the soil with a fork first and plant the bulbs with the roots down.
4. When planting alliums, as with many other bulbs, plant to three times the depth of the bulb 10-15cm down.
5. Smaller varieties should be planted 15-20cm apart, large varieties (such 'Cristophii') 25-30cm and the very large (such as 'Globemaster') 35cm apart.
6. Most of the popular ornamental onions are winter hardy to -32°C.

How to plant in a container

Alliums also make great container plants so their spectacular displays can be enjoyed in smaller spaces.

1. If planting larger varieties, it's important to use a deep container and one that is at least 37.5cm in diameter.
2. Plant at three times the depth of the bulb, about 10cm in the soil.
3. Always use high quality bulb compost and ensure there are drainage holes in the base of the container because too much water will cause the bulbs to rot.
4. Water sufficiently immediately after planting.
5. Once the flowering period is over, leave the foliage to die back naturally and replot with new compost the following year.

Aftercare

1. Alliums are relatively low maintenance and just need to be moderately watered until they fade to yellow.
2. Don't cut or clear away the old foliage after flowering as this is needed to photosynthesise and feed the bulb for next year, let it die back naturally.
3. If older plants are becoming overcrowded you can lift, divide, and replant allium bulbs after the foliage and flowers have died down.
4. Alliums in containers can be more susceptible to winter so move containers to a sheltered spot in colder weather.

Pests and diseases

Alliums can suffer from onion white rot, downy mildew, and onion fly, although they tend to be trouble free in the border. If this does occur, pick off and dispose of infected leaves and remove and destroy severely affected plants.

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Anemone 'Blanda Blue'

Anemone

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower May – July

Height 10-20cm (4-8in)



Where to plant

All anemone varieties thrive in full sun, with well drained soil.

How to plant in the ground

1. When you unpack them, they'll appear quite small; soak them in water overnight, so they plump up in preparation for planting.

2. Add a good bulb or garden compost with added grit to the soil to prevent waterlogging (especially important with *Anemone blanda* which needs good drainage). This will add air and retain moisture in the summer but ensure your planting site drains well in winter.
3. *Anemone nemerosa* loves a damp soil so adding mulch of bark-based soil conditioner or making your own leaf mould will benefit.
4. Plant your bulbs on their longest side so they're horizontal, about 8cm deep and 10cm apart.

How to plant in containers

1. Soak your anemones overnight so they absorb the water ready for planting.
2. Fill your container with a high-quality bulb potting mix and make sure there are plenty of drainage holes, so the soil doesn't become too wet, causing the bulbs to rot.
3. Planting in a container is similar to planting in the ground so plant approximately 8cm deep and 10cm apart.
4. For the best container display, ensure you plant no more than 10 per pot.
5. Water well and place your container in a sunny spot.

Aftercare

1. Water as required but make sure the soil is moist and not wet to avoid rotting.
2. Feed every couple of weeks with high potash feed such as tomato food.
3. After the flowering period is over, leave the foliage to collect sunlight and strengthen for next season.
4. Once this has yellowed, remove old foliage, and cut back to the ground prior to new growth in the following year.
5. If you want to divide your anemones, wait until their dormant period after they have finished flowering in summer.

Pests and diseases

Anemones can be tasty treats for caterpillars whose larvae feed on roots, stems, and foliage. Wherever possible, move by hand or cover vulnerable plants with fleece to prevent infestation.

They're also can be susceptible to powdery mildews which is usually caused by shade or poor air circulation around the plants. Look out for a white powder coating the foliage which should be removed and disposed of to prevent spreading.



Hyacinthoides non-scripta
(English Bluebells)

Hyacinthoides non-scripta (English bluebells)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower April – May

Height 25cm (10in)



Where to plant

Our English bluebells are sourced from sustainable and certified producers and are best planted in well drained soil that is rich in organic matter, so will thrive when grown in compost, leaf mould or manure. A woodland plant, bluebells love shade beneath trees and shrubs.

How to plant in the ground

1. Once the site and soil are prepared, plant your bulbs 15cm deep and space 15cm apart.
2. Make sure the pointed end of the bulb is facing upwards for optimum growth.
3. If planting *Hyacinthoides* for a naturalising effect, it best to plant clumps together with irregular spacing to create a wild and erratic look.
4. Water well after planting.

How to plant in containers

1. *Hyacinthoides* also can be grown in containers that have adequate drainage holes and in a position that gets full sun to part shade.
2. Fill container with a good quality compost with organic matter and added grit.
3. Place bulbs 15cm deep and 15cm apart.
4. Cover with soil and gently water to keep the soil moist.

Aftercare

1. Once growth appears, water lightly but be careful not to overwater which will cause the bulbs to rot.
2. When flower buds start to appear, feed every couple of weeks with a plant food that is high in potassium for the best results.
3. Continue to water lightly after the flowering period until the foliage has died down.
4. If planted in the ground, flowers just need deadheading and foliage cutting back. If left in a container, lift and store in a cool dark place over winter.

Pests and diseases

Bluebells are generally pest and disease free, although they can be a host for the parasitic fungus *Uromyces muscari* which can cause bluebell rust, but this can be controlled with a fungicide. They are also deer, rabbit and squirrel resistant, so they're ideal for planting in areas with wildlife.

Tip

If you want to help your bluebells spread, lift, and divide bulbs after flowering.



How to plant

1. We recommend to plant them where they will remain undisturbed for several years as they don't like being moved or having roots disturbed.
2. Plant the bulbs during autumn at least 10cm deep or approximately double the size of the bulb and 8-10cm apart.
3. Plant the bulbs with the points facing upwards, cover with a nutrient rich compost and water well to settle the soil.
4. Apply a generous layer of mulch in autumn to protect against colder weather before flowering.

How to plant in containers

1. Fill your container with a high-quality bulb compost and add crocks or grit to aid drainage.
2. Plant at a depth of 20cm or approximately double the size of the bulb.
3. Place the pot in a sheltered area in colder months.
4. Water well during dry periods.

Aftercare

1. Water as needed during active growth periods, about 2cm of moisture per week is a good estimate.
2. Camassia will benefit from a light feed with slow-release or organic fertiliser in the early spring.
3. After flowering has finished for the season leave the foliage in place as the leaves will gather sunlight and energise the bulbs for future flowering.
4. Cut back faded flower spikes unless collecting seed.
5. It's best to divide Camassia in summer when dormant before new growth emerges.

Pests and diseases

Camassias are resistant to many diseases and pests and often ignored by rodents.



Camassia leichtlinii 'Semiplena'

Camassia

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower May – June

Height 60-90cm (24-36in)



Where to plant

Camassia love moist, damp soil. They flourish in full sun or in partial shade and are extremely hardy, thriving in most conditions.

Tip

Plant spring bulbs in a plastic pot that can be placed inside a terracotta pot to avoid cracking during cold weather.





Chionodoxa 'Pink Giant'

Chionodoxa (Glory of the Snow)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower March – April

Height 15-20cm (6-8in)



Where to plant

Also known as Glory of the Snow, Chionodoxa is one of the first bulbs to flower in spring and is best planted in full sun or partial shade in almost any soil. A great choice for naturalising under trees and shrubs or in grass.

How to plant in the ground

1. Plant in a site where the soil drains well and mix in compost with added grit to avoid waterlogged soil.
2. Dig holes that are approximately 5cm deep and 5cm apart and plant with the slightly pointed tops facing upwards.
3. After planting, water to settle the soil around the newly planting bulbs.

How to plant in containers

1. We recommend planting Chionodoxa in a large container with good drainage holes to prevent waterlogged soil.
2. Use a high-quality potting compost which contains added grit to aid with drainage and air circulation in soil.
3. Like planting in the ground, make sure your bulbs are pointed end up and 5cm deep and approximately 5cm apart.
4. Water lightly and place in a spot where they will receive a full to half day's sun.

Aftercare

1. Water as needed during growth periods and fertilise with a high potassium feed, such as tomato food.
2. After the flowering period has ended, leave the foliage in place so the leaves can photosynthesise and gather energy for next year.
3. Don't mow or cut back plants that are growing in grass until the foliage has died back.
4. Once the leaves yellow, they can be left to rot down to enrich the soil and your bulbs can lay dormant until the next growing cycle.
5. Try to leave the planting location undisturbed to allow for maximum growth next year.

Pests and diseases

Chionodoxa are generally pest and disease free. Slugs can nibble on the leaves and foliage so organic slug pellets or copper tape can solve this.

Tip

Chionodoxa mixes well naturalising with other spring bulbs like Galanthus, Crocus, Narcissus and Tulip for a carpet of colour.





Crocus 'Mixed Species'

Crocus

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower February – March

Height 8-20cm (3-8in)



Where to plant

Like galanthus, crocus corms love soil enriched with organic matter with good drainage, and look their best naturalised in grass, or under trees. They love full sun or partial shade and will tolerate any soil.

How to plant in the ground

1. Crocus corms should be planted about 10cm deep in well-drained, gritty rich soil in a sunny situation and approximately 7.5cm apart.
2. Fill the bottom of each dug hole with a thin layer of bulb compost which contains added grit for free drainage.
3. Add another layer of bulb compost before replacing the soil or lawn over the bulb by treading down the earth and water well.

How to plant in containers

Most crocus varieties will grow well in containers and look great either on their own or mixed with other spring flowering bulbs.

1. Use good quality bulb compost mixed with horticultural grit and cover the drainage holes with crocks to prevent it blocking with silt.
2. Plant approximately 3cm below the soil and 1-2cm apart in your container.
3. Move to a sunny, bright location once the corms begin to sprout.

Aftercare

1. Crocuses are generally low-maintenance plants. Keep them watered if the weather is dry, but don't waterlog the soil.
2. Deadhead as soon as the flowers have gone over but don't cut off the foliage until it has yellowed.
3. Leave the foliage to grow for about 6-8 weeks after flowering. This allows the bulbs time to build up resources to bloom again next year.
4. When mowing the grass, try to avoid the foliage as much as possible.
5. Top dress with rich compost in spring, when new growth appears.

Pests and diseases

Rodents can be a real problem as they like to dig up the corms so you may have to protect borders or planted areas with some chicken wire. Slugs and snails will also go for the new shoots so place a layer of grease or a copper band around pots.

Tip

For a naturalising effect, try not to be too precise when planting and place bulbs in irregular patterns.





Cyclamen hederifolium

Cyclamen

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower January – February

Height 5-13cm (2-5in)



Where to plant

Cyclamen love moist, well-drained soil and partial sun but can also be planted in shadier conditions beneath both trees and shrubs.

How to plant in the ground

1. Cyclamen work best when planted in large numbers so plant several tubers in a large hole with added compost, approximately 5cm deep and 15cm apart.
2. Plant the tuber, top concave side up, so only about a 2cm of soil covers it.
3. If creating a naturalising effect, plant clumps in an irregular pattern.
4. Fill in the planting holes with compost and gently firm down.
5. Water immediately.

How to plant in containers

1. Cyclamen also thrive in container displays; we recommend planting in a large container with drainage holes to assure the soil does not get waterlogged.
2. Fill three quarters of the container with a mixture of John Innes No. 2 Potting Compost with extra grit.
3. Place the concave side of the tubers in the soil pointing upwards, approximately 5cm deep.

4. Fill the container back in with soil and gently firm down.
5. Water in generously.

Aftercare

1. Water your cyclamen during their growing period if the weather is dry.
2. If your soil is sandy, apply a slow release fertiliser in spring or a yearly mulch to keep the plants fed and protect them from a winter blast.
3. Remove spent flowers and fallen leaves by hand to reduce the risk of mould.
4. Smaller container plants will need repotting during the dormant period and replace with fresh soil or compost.

Pests and diseases

Mice and squirrels may cause a problem by digging up freshly planted tubers, so try to keep them at bay with chicken wire. Cyclamen can also suffer from grey mould, *Botrytis cinerea*, which can attack stalks and leaves. This can be reduced by maintaining good air circulation and avoiding overcrowding the plants. Remove any dead plant material to avoid the spread.

Tip

Pair with other winter blooms such as hellebores, snowdrops, fritillaries, and primroses for stunning colour on darker days.



Eranthis hyemalis (Winter Aconites)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower February – April

Height 5-7cm (2-2½in)



Where to plant

Also known as winter aconites, Eranthis will grow in both sun and shade, in a moist but well drained soil. They look best when grown in large numbers for a naturalised effect.

How to plant in the ground

1. Before planting, we recommend you soak the bulbs in warm water overnight to soften them, ready for establishment.
2. Prepare the soil with a high-quality compost and plant approximately 5cm deep in groups and 5cm apart for the best effect.
3. If soil is poor and sandy, organic matter such as a nutrient rich manure will help growing conditions.
4. Water well, allowing for the soil to settle around the bulbs and keep moist over the growing period.
5. Adding a layer of mulch can help to keep the soil moist in warm spring weather.

How to plant in containers

1. Eranthis has shallow roots and tubers which grow just below the surface of the soil, so they can be grown in pots, containers, and window boxes.
2. A container with drainage holes is ideal to keep the soil moist. Fill three quarters of the container with potted compost with added grit.
3. Plant your tubers 5cm deep and then cover with soil until the pot is filled to 1cm from the rim.
4. Keep soil moist over autumn and winter.
5. If you wish to force indoors, move to a cold, dark place to trick the bulbs into thinking its winter.
6. Move to a location that gets full sun in February and early March when growth appears.

Aftercare

1. Ensure the plants are kept moist during the growing season, and over summer.
2. Feed with a high potash fertiliser.
3. Always keep the soil weed free to allow the plants to spread and avoid overcrowding.
4. Allow the foliage to die back naturally to feed the bulbs for the following growing season.



Eranthis hyemalis Cilicica

5. If grown in grass, avoid mowing until foliage has yellowed and died back.
6. Tubers can be dug up shortly after flowering has finished and transplanted to another spot in the garden.

Pests and diseases

Eranthis is virtually pest and disease free, but may be susceptible to smut fungus, if small spots are noticed on the plant, remove the infected part, and dispose to avoid spread.



Eremurus 'Cleopatra'

Eremurus (Foxtail Lily)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower June – July

Height 1.2m (47in)



Where to plant

Commonly known as the Foxtail Lily, Eremurus originate from dry grasslands and desert conditions so need to be planted in a site with soil that has good drainage and a sunny position to flower well.

How to plant in the ground

1. When the spider shaped crowns arrive, they may be brittle, so we recommend soaking them in water for a couple of hours before planting.
2. Prepare your planting site with a high-quality garden compost.
3. Plant the crowns approximately 10cm below the surface of your well drained soil in a hole that is wider than the tentacle like roots.
4. Space the crowns out by 30-90cm depending on the size of the crown.

How to grow in containers

Eremurus is not well suited for long-term container growing due to the size of the crowns.

Aftercare

1. Feed with a high potassium fertiliser, such as potash or sulphate, once a month in late spring and summer.
2. Keep well-watered and ensure that the plants do not dry out when in leaf. When dormant in summer, leave to thrive in dry conditions.
3. If your Eremurus grows early in the season, protect with fleece or a cloche to prevent late frost damage.
4. Eremurus may require staking depending on height and position; take care not to damage the roots when inserting cane support.
5. Once flowering has finished, cut the flower spike at the base, and wait for foliage to die naturally before removing.
6. Mature Eremurus clumps can be divided once flowers and foliage has died off.

Pests and diseases

Eremurus is generally disease free but can be susceptible to slugs and snails. To prevent your plants being eaten, create a natural barrier made from copper tape, bark mulch, eggshells, or a nematode biological control can be used.

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Erythronium (Dog's Tooth Violet)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower March – April

Height 30cm (12in)



Where to plant

Commonly known as Dog's Tooth Violet, Erythronium is a shade loving plant and flourishes in cool, damp conditions and thrives in a moist but well drained soil.

How to plant in the ground

1. Choose a sheltered site to plant your Erythronium bulbs.
2. Plant as soon as you receive to avoid the bulbs drying out.
3. Prepare your planting site with humus-rich soil and a nutrient rich compost.
4. Plant the bulbs about 10-15cm deep in the soil with the pointed end facing upwards, approximately 10cm apart.
5. If you are looking to create a naturalising look, plant in small groups in an irregular pattern for maximum effect.
6. Cover the bulbs with soil and water as needed.

How to grow in containers

1. Fill your containers with good quality compost, preferably with added grit to ensure well-drained soil.
2. Dig holes and plant the bulbs 10-15cm deep and 10cm apart. The bulbs are rounded, with small points on the top which should be planted facing up.
3. After planting, water well to settle the soil around the bulbs and place in a sheltered place.

Aftercare

1. After planting, the bulbs can be left to their own devices for winter as they require little maintenance until the foliage sprouts in early spring, followed by delicate blooms in March and April.
2. Water as needed to keep the soil moist.
3. Let the foliage die down naturally so the bulb can harness energy for the following year.
4. They don't like being disturbed, so make sure where you plant is the right home for your bulbs.



Pests and diseases

Erythronium is generally trouble free and easy to grow. Look out for bulb rot which is down to badly drained soil that leads to this problem. You may encounter slugs or aphids which can be controlled with a biological nematode or with warm soapy water.



Fritillaria meleagris Mixed

Fritillaria

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower April – May

Height 15-20cm (6-8in)



Where to plant

Fritillaria will grow both in full sun on well-drained soil, and in damp areas in full sun or dappled shade.

How to plant in the ground

1. Where soil conditions are less than ideal it's advisable to prepare the site before planting, with organic matter and horticultural grit.
2. Plant larger varieties such as *Fritillaria imperialis* 15cm deep, whilst smaller varieties like *Fritillaria meleagris* can be planted 8cm deep.

3. We recommend fritillaria are planted in small unregimented drifts about 10cm apart.
4. It's best to plant the bulbs on their sides to prevent water getting into the crowns.
5. The soil can also be enhanced by adding extra grit or sand for excellent drainage.
6. Fritillarias are suitable for rock gardens, raised beds or naturalising in grass.

How to plant in containers

1. Fill your container with a high-quality bulb compost and add crocks or grit to aid drainage.
2. Depending on the size of your container, plant five bulbs per pot approximately 10cm into the soil and water in.
3. The shorter fritillarias such as *meleagris* and *michailovskyi* are best suited to container planting.

Aftercare

1. Add compost as the shoots emerge in the spring, as well as applying a general-purpose fertiliser and high potassium fertiliser to aid growth.
2. Once fritillaria has bloomed, keep the foliage going until it dies back naturally.
3. When the foliage is completely yellow or brown, remove it from the garden.
4. If a well-established clump starts to flower poorly, then lift the bulbs in early autumn when dormant, improve the soil or move to a new planting area.

Pests and diseases

The commonly encountered pests that attack fritillaria include the red lily beetle, slugs, and snails. It's best to check frequently from early spring so action can be taken before a population of lily beetle has developed. Beetles can either be picked off by hand or the use of an organic insecticide can be used if the problem persists.

Tip

If you want to keep your bulbs for next year, deadhead flower heads and cut stems down so the bulbs don't waste energy trying to produce seed.





Galanthus elwesii

Galanthus (Snowdrop)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower January – February

Height 10-15cm (4-6in)



Where to plant

Galanthus prefer a shady spot and will thrive in most soils under trees, deciduous shrubs or in the front of borders. They're also ideal for planting in drifts, naturalising in a lawn to create a woodland effect.

How to plant in the ground

1. We recommend you plant your galanthus about 10cm deep in the soil with a small bulb planter, roughly 10cm apart.
2. Galanthus need semi-shade and a well-drained but moisture retentive soil so plant with leaf mulch or a good multi-purpose compost in your rockery, or alpine garden.

How to plant in containers

1. In addition to planting in the garden, galanthus can be planted in containers and the bulbs can be forced to bloom so you can enjoy their pretty nodding heads indoors.
2. Fill your container with a bulb compost that contains grit to aid drainage.
3. Place the bulbs side by side in your container and plant about 10cm deep with the pointed heads up and keep soil moist.
4. Store your container in a cool, dark place and once foliage appears, move into a sunny location.

Aftercare

1. Try not to let your galanthus bulbs dry out in summer which is a common cause of their failure the following year.
2. When planted in grass, don't mow until the leaves have died right back.
3. Once the foliage has died down, galanthus should be split and replanted to avoid overcrowding, which can affect the flower display the following year.
4. Continue to feed with a good quality potting medium, as well a bone meal fertiliser.

Pests and diseases

Look out for a fuzzy, grey mould on galanthus that is caused by the fungus *Botrytis galanthina*, causing leaves and flowers to collapse. It comes about in wet conditions so if detected, ensure you remove the affected bulbs and destroy them, as well avoiding planting galanthus in the same spot where the disease has occurred previously.

Rodents such as mice, rats and squirrels enjoy feasting on galanthus bulbs and love digging down to get to their meal. To tackle this, make sure the bulbs are planted at an appropriate depth where they can't get to them and mix in grit or sharp stones as a deterrent. Chicken wire can also be used to make a cage around your planted area.

Tip

When you buy your galanthus bulbs, plant them immediately as they dry out easily. If storing, keep them in a cool and dark place for a few days.





Hyacinth 'Royal Navy'

Hyacinth

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower March – April

Height 20-30cm (8-12in)



Where to plant

Hyacinth bulbs prefer a good, rich, well-drained soil in full sun. They don't grow well in shade, with their spikes of flowers getting thinner every year so for best results plant in a sunny spot.

How to plant in the ground

1. We recommend you wear gloves when handling hyacinth bulbs to avoid skin irritation.
2. Clear the area of all weeds and dig in some organic matter such as well-rotted manure to provide nutrients.
3. Plant your hyacinth bulbs in autumn, pointy side up. Mix in a good bulb compost with added grit for drainage.
4. They should be planted 10cm deep and 4cm apart.

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5. Ensure they're watered if there's a dry spell in autumn to help them get established. Avoid overwatering them as this can cause the roots to rot.

How to plant in outdoor containers

1. For a seasonal display, plant in a soil-based bulb compost with horticultural grit to provide good drainage.
2. Plant them 10cm deep and cover with soil.
3. Firm in and water well to keep the soil moist to help them establish, however, avoid overwatering as this can cause the bulbs to rot.
4. Feed them every week with a bone meal fertiliser until they die down naturally.

How to plant forced hyacinths indoors

1. If growing indoors, the bulbs need a chilling period to bloom.
2. Plant your hyacinth bulbs in a large container filled with multi-purpose or bulb compost.
3. Make sure to plant the tips of the bulbs just above the surface, as this provides a good depth of compost for the roots to develop properly.
4. Place your potted bulbs in a cool, dark place for 6 weeks in a temperature of 10°C or below.
5. Check your pot/container regularly to ensure that the compost remains moist.
6. When the shoots are about 5cm tall, move the container into a warm and light position.

Aftercare

1. Once the flowering period is over, you can deadhead the flower spike, but allow the foliage to die back naturally as the leaves will provide the nutrients for next year's blooms.
2. After flowering, indoor hyacinths can be planted outdoors.
3. Every few years we recommend to dig up your hyacinth bed or container, discard and remove any rotting or diseased bulbs and replant the bulbs in a new area.
4. To keep your hyacinths healthy and blooming every year, we recommend that you top dress with a rich compost in February, when the new growth and shoots start to appear.

For container planted hyacinths, apply a liquid high-potassium feed, such as tomato fertiliser, from early spring until six weeks after flowering.

Pests and diseases

Botrytis fungus can attack and damage the hyacinths if left untreated. If this occurs, a fungicide can be applied. Aphids are a common pest and attack the flower buds. A simple organic method to get rid of them is to douse with soapy warm water in a spray bottle.



Fritillaria 'William Rex'

Imperial fritillaria

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower April – May

Height 1m (40 inches)



Where to plant

These fritillarias are best planted in a rich, well drained soil in full sun where they will grow undisturbed for many years.

How to plant in the ground

1. Select your site for your fritillaria bulbs, like the back of a border and dig in a nutrient rich compost with added grit.
2. Plant the bulbs 30cm deep and 30cm apart, any shallower will result in poor flowering.
3. Cover with soil and water in well, firming down the soil.

How to grow in containers

1. If you have heavy clay soil, imperial fritillarias are best grown in containers or raised beds.
2. Mix equal quantities of John Innes no. 3 with a multi-purpose compost with added grit.
3. Plant as you would in the ground at 30cm deep.

Aftercare

1. Add a layer of compost as new shoots emerge in spring.
2. Feed with a high potassium fertiliser every two weeks once the bulbs have made a few cm of growth.
3. Once flowering season is over, keep the foliage going until it dies back naturally.
4. When the foliage has yellowed, remove from the garden.
5. If a well-established clump starts to flower poorly, then lift the bulbs in early autumn when dormant, improve the soil or move to a new planting area.

Pests and diseases

The most common fritillaria pests include the red lily beetle, slugs, and snails. Beetles can either be picked off by hand or an organic insecticide can be used if the problem persists.

Imperial fritillaria are resistant to moles, deer, squirrels, rabbits and rodents due to their distinctive smell which deters them.

Tip

You can grow your fritillaria in their own plant pot and then sink into the border. Once flowering, they can be lifted and popped to one side until next year.





Iris 'Red Ember'

Iris

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower February – March

Height Up to 90cm (35in) for taller varieties, 10-15cm (4-6in) for dwarf varieties



Where to plant

Plant your iris rhizomes where the soil drains well and in full sun. There are two main types of irises – the most well-known border iris is *Iris germanica*, sometimes known as bearded iris, as well as the miniature iris varieties *Iris histrioides* and *Iris reticulata*.

How to plant in the ground

1. Dig a hole, large enough for the rhizome and roots.
2. If planting in heavy soil, mix in a bulb compost with added grit to add drainage in borders or raised beds.
3. Plant 10cm in depth and 30cm apart, these look best when planted in groups.

4. If you mound the soil slightly in the centre of the hole, it can make placing the rhizomes easier. Work the soil back between the roots so they're covered but leave the top of the rhizome exposed to the sun, to ensure flowering for next year.
5. Water in well after planting.

How to plant dwarf iris in containers

1. Use a mix of two parts bulb or potting compost and one part grit for sharp drainage.
2. Space the bulbs over the surface so they don't touch, approximately 7cm deep and 10cm apart.
3. Cover the rhizomes with 5cm of compost and firm in lightly, then water.
4. Leave the top of the rhizome exposed to the sun to encourage flowering.

Aftercare

1. Feed irises once every two weeks during watering using a low nitrogen fertiliser such as bone meal.
2. A decrease in blooms usually indicates that it's time to divide, so consider dividing your irises every few years. This is necessary, particularly for container irises because it keeps the plant from overcrowding or suffocating itself.
3. Cut back the foliage to a third before digging up the clumps.
4. Separate healthy new rhizomes from the older ones toward the centre of the clump. Discard any rhizomes with holes or disease.

Pests and diseases

Irises can be prone to fungal diseases such as leaf spot (*Cladosporium iridis*), ink disease (*Bipolaris iridis*), rust (*Puccinia iridis*) and rot (*Pectobacterium carotovorum*). To prevent these, we recommend all leaf debris at the end of each year and plants affected by ink disease are best disposed of. Plant rhizomes in well-drained soils to avoid bacterial rot. Fungicides with tebuconazole and trifloxystrobin also carry a recommendation for use against leaf spots on ornamentals plants and may have some effect against iris leaf spot or ink disease.

Tip

Try pairing with lobelia or cranesbill geraniums. Irises look spectacular when rising about the foliage of low growing flowers.





Muscari 'White Magic and armeniacum' Collection

Muscari (Grape Hyacinth)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower April – May

Height 15cm (6in)



Where to plant

Muscari can be planted in full sun and will tolerate almost any soil. Don't plant them where it's too wet or too dry and make sure you have plenty of space as they spread quickly.

How to plant in the ground

1. Dig over the soil, removing any weeds and stones in your border.
2. Plant bulbs with the pointed end up approximately 10cm deep and 8-10cm apart as they like to spread. They look best planted in groups.

Tip

The general rule of thumb for the planting depth is to plant a bulb twice as deep as the bulb is tall.



3. After planting, water well so that the soil above the bulbs settles.

How to plant in containers

1. To prevent clumps from spreading too quickly, Muscari can also be grown in containers.
2. Check for adequate drainage holes at the bottom of the container as they don't like waterlogged soil.
3. Plant 7.5-10cm deep and 8cm apart.
4. Place the container in partial to full sun.

Aftercare

1. After the flowering period ends, the leaves will also die back and at this point, you can remove the old leaves ready for next year.
2. Lift and divide congested clumps in the summer to maintain vigour.
3. Top dress with compost in spring when new growth appears.
4. Feed with a high potash fertiliser for maximum growth.

Pests and diseases

Muscari is generally pest free but can suffer from mosaic virus, spread by aphids. Be vigilant and spray with soapy warm water.



Narcissus 'Pheasant's Eye'

Narcissus (Daffodil)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower March – April

Height 15-45cm (6-18in)



Where to plant

Narcissus is easy to grow and will love in full sun or partial shade. They will grow in both light, sandy soil as well as heavy clay.

How to plant in the ground

1. Before planting, ensure you have loosened the soil to alleviate any compaction and dig in organic matter to improve both soil structure and drainage.
2. Plant your narcissus bulbs with the pointed head up three times the size of the bulb below the surface of the soil, approximately 10cm deep.
3. Space the bulbs about two bulb widths, approximately 15cm apart.

How to plant in containers

1. Narcissus has an extensive root structure, so a large container is preferred for growth.
2. To plant, fill about half to two-thirds of your container with moist compost.
3. Plant the narcissus bulbs as deep as you would in the ground, about 10cm deep and 5cm apart.
4. Cover the bulbs with compost and then place in a cool, dark place for about 10 weeks, before moving the container into a bright spot when shoots are 5cm tall.
5. Water sparingly as narcissus bulbs don't like to be waterlogged.

Planting indoors

1. If forcing narcissus indoors, plant in your desired container, just below the surface in a bulb compost.
2. Store in a cold, dark place at a temperature between 1.5°C and 10°C for six weeks until the shoots are 4-5cm tall.
3. Bring inside the house and place in a sunny position for flowering six weeks later.

Aftercare

1. Once your flowers are past their best, deadhead them to give the bulbs a chance to save their energy for next spring.
2. After flowering, apply a high potassium liquid feed such as Westland Sulphate of Potash, every couple of weeks from when the flowers have faded until the first signs of yellowing of foliage.
3. Once the leaves are yellow, about six weeks after flowering ends, cut back.
4. Firm down the soil around the plants to make it more difficult for bulb flies to deposit eggs.

Pests and diseases

Narcissus is usually low maintenance but can be susceptible to slugs and snails which eat the foliage and flowers, virus diseases, basal rot, and narcissus bulb fly. Watch out for 'daffodil blindness' too which can be caused by shallow planting, early foliage removal, overcrowding or bulb fly attack.

Tip

Narcissus don't like acidic soil so make sure you plant where the pH is lower or add lime where needed.





Nectaroscordum siculum

Nectaroscordium (Sicilian Honey Garlic)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower May – June

Height 70 - 80cm



Where to plant

A member of the Allium family, Nectaroscordium will flourish in a sunny or shady spot in any fertile, well-drained soil.

How to plant in the ground

1. Nectaroscordium look spectacular in late spring borders, with their tall flowerheads soaring above lower growing plants.
2. If on heavy clay soil, dig in a good compost with added horticultural grit to aid drainage and avoid bulb rot.
3. Plant bulbs with the pointed end up at a depth of 15cm in the soil and approximately 25cm apart in sun or part shade.
4. For the best impact, plant in groups for a great visual display with other allium varieties.

How to grow in containers

1. Place crocks in the bottom of a deep container with drainage holes to avoid waterlogging the bulbs.

2. Add about 10cm of potting compost and place the bulbs so that they're not touching the outside pot or each other.
3. Cover with another 20cm of potting compost, water well so the soil around the bulbs settle.
4. Ensure the soil is kept moist but not too wet and protect from frost by placing in a sheltered spot.

Aftercare

1. After planting your bulbs, feed with a general-purpose feed with high potassium for optimum growth and flowering.
2. Water well after planting, saturating the soil around the bulbs.
3. Don't cut or clear away the old foliage after flowering as this is needed to photosynthesise and feed the bulb for next year, let it die back naturally.
4. If older plants are becoming overcrowded you can lift, divide, and replant allium bulbs after the foliage and flowers have died down.

Pests and diseases

Watch out for onion white rot, downy mildew, and onion fly. If any of these occur, cut off and dispose of infected leaves and remove and destroy severely affected plants.



Tulip 'Amazing Parrot'

Tulip

Optimum planting time October – November

Flower April – May

Height 10-70cm (4-28in)



Where to plant

Tulips flourish in well drained fertile soil in full sun.

How to plant in the ground

1. We recommend that tulips are planted slightly later than other bulbs, in October and November before the first hard frost hits. If planted earlier, they will start to grow, and this may result in frost damage to the shoots as well as reducing the risk of the bulbs being affected by viruses.
2. Dig a hole at least three times the depth of the bulb, approximately 10cm deep, with either with a hand trowel or with a bulb planter and space about 15cm apart.
3. If you have heavy soil, add a bulb compost with horticultural grit to give your bulbs the best start.
4. Make sure the bulb tip is pointing upwards and then fill the hole, compacting the soil around the bulb gently.
5. Water in so the soil is moist and apply a bone meal pellet fertiliser over the topsoil to encourage flowering.

How to plant in containers

1. They don't like waterlogged soil so add crocks or a layer of gravel to the bottom of a large container to aid drainage.
2. Add a bulb compost to the container filling to around 20cm below the rim.
3. Place the tulip bulbs about 5-8cm apart, with the tips of the bulbs pointing up.
4. Fill the rest of the pot with compost, up to around 3cm from the top of the rim. Make sure to firm the compost down between the bulbs and water thoroughly.
5. Stand the container in a sheltered position over autumn and winter before moving to sunny position in April so you can fully enjoy the display.

Aftercare

1. When feeding in spring, use a liquid feed high in potash so it gets to the growing bulb quickly, feeding the roots.
2. Deadhead the tulip as soon as the flower has dropped its petals.
3. Wait for the leaves to die down and then remove to allow all the energy to go back into the bulb for next year's growth.
4. We recommend you leave the bulbs in the ground if your soil is free-draining and sandy. Make sure they're in a sunny spot over the summer, so they don't rot in the ground while they're dormant.

Pests and diseases

Tulips can be damaged by slugs and snails so applying organic pellets or copper tape is recommended. Rodents can also be an issue but can be kept at bay with chicken wire. Plants can also be affected by tulip fire, which is a fungal disease caused by *Botrytis tulipae*, producing brown spots, and twisted, withered leaves. Remove infected bulbs promptly to avoid contaminating the soil and don't replant in the area.

Tip

If planting in containers, regularly turn to prevent your tulips bending towards the sun.





Puschkinia scilloides libanotica



Gladiolus 'Red Sensation'

Puschkinia scilloides

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower March – April

Height 15cm (6in)



Where to plant

Puschkinia will grow well in any moderately fertile, well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade.

How to plant in the ground

1. Puschkinia look fantastic at the front of a border, mixed with other spring flowering plants.
2. Mix in a high-quality compost with added grit to aid drainage and avoid bulb rot.
3. Plant the bulbs with the pointed end facing upwards 10-15cm deep and space the bulbs 5-10cm apart.

How to grow in containers

1. Choose a container with sufficient drainage hole and fill 2/3 with a potting compost.
2. Plant the bulbs 10cm deep in the soil with their pointed ends upwards, making sure they are not touching.
3. Cover with compost, water well and place in direct sunshine.

Aftercare

1. Keep the soil moist throughout the growing season and during the summer when the soil is a lot drier and apply a high potash feed fortnightly.
2. Once the flowering has finished, allow the foliage to die back naturally as this will help prepare the plants for the following season.
3. We recommend applying a layer of mulch in autumn to maintain moisture levels and to protect from cold weather.

Pests and diseases

Puschkinia doesn't tend to suffer from pest or disease problems and is also resistant to deer.

Gladiolus (Gladioli)

Optimum planting time September – November

Flower May – June

Height 60cm (24in)



Where to plant

Gladiolus need a sunny position and good, well-drained soil with plenty of organic matter. Most are planted in spring, but these two varieties should be planted in autumn.

How to plant in the ground

1. Plant your gladiolus corms 15cm deep, 15cm apart in beds and borders.
2. It is best to plant in groups for best visual impact.

How to plant in containers

1. Choose a container with sufficient drainage holes and fill with 2/3 potting compost.
2. Corms can be planted closer together than in the ground so plant 10cm deep and 15cm apart.
3. Cover in compost and water well. Move to a position where the bulbs will be in full sun.

Aftercare

1. As the plant begins to grow, feed with a high potash fertiliser fortnightly when in flower.
2. Make sure the soil is kept moist but not waterlogged to avoid bulb rot.
3. As the flowering season ends, deadhead but keep the browning foliage to allow the bulb to store food and prepare for next year.

Pests and diseases

Gladiolus thrips can cause a mottling on the foliage and flowers of your plants. Check frequently in spring so action can be taken before an infestation develops. Cut and dispose of any affected parts of the plant or use organic sprays such as pyrethrum, surfactants, fatty acids, or plant oils. If persistent, insecticides that contain the synthetic pyrethroids lambda-cyhalothrin are recommended.

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