

Planting Fall Bulbs or Corms

Katie Ward, Broomfield Master Gardener Apprentice

Now is the perfect time to begin thinking about spring blooming plants! Fall-planted bulbs (daffodils, hyacinths, allium, and tulips) and corms (crocus) bear beautiful colors in the spring and can be a great way to add color to your garden while other plants slowly awaken from winter.

1. Select your site

Consider areas of your garden where early spring color will add visual appeal and adequate drainage is possible. If you plan to leave bulbs in one location for more than a year, you'll need to select a location with suitable sunshine to ensure the bulbs can regenerate. Beware of selecting a southern exposure, especially close to the foundation, as this may encourage the plants to emerge too early and may result in freezing injury with our rapidly fluctuating temperatures in early spring.

2. Select your bulbs or corms

Make sure the bulbs do not have mold or evidence of damage. When possible, select the largest bulbs available for that variety as the size of your bulb has a direct connection with the resulting flower size, so the bigger the tulip bulb, the larger your spring tulip will likely be. Now is a great time to select so you'll have the best selection available.



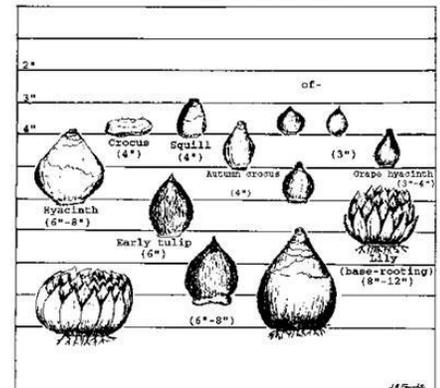
3. Prepare your soil

You will plant your bulbs deeper than typical seeds, so you will need to prepare your soil specifically for planting your bulbs or corms. Till the soil to a depth of 3 or four inches and apply your fertilizer and soil amendments at this depth so that it can be utilized by the roots of the bulb. Aeration is a key part of bulb success, so consider adding some organic matter to your soil. CSU Extension *Fact Sheet 7.235* provides a lot of great details on selecting a soil amendment.



4. Plant your bulbs

Bulbs do best when planted in late September as this allows sufficient time for bulbs to become well rooted before the ground freezes. Use a planting chart (see images to the right and link below for reference) to determine the depth necessary for your plant. As a broad rule, the depth should be four times the height of the bulb, as measured from the tip of the bulb to the top of the soil surface. Plant the bulb with growing tip up, gently cover the bulb with soil and water to settle the soil in your newly planted area.



5. Mulch after the ground freezes

Add a three-inch layer of mulch over your plants after the ground has frozen. This will help prevent the freezing and thawing cycle that happens throughout the winter and can easily damage the roots and bulbs. You can remove the mulch in spring when temperatures even out.



Daffodils



Crocus



Tulip