



THE LANDSCAPE CENTER

For spring blooming bulbs, plant in October

Crisp fall air is conducive to many forms of outdoor activity, including gardening. Fall, in fact, is the only time spring flowering bulbs such as tulips and daffodils can be planted.

If you've never planted bulbs before, or for a reminder, here are some tips for you.

The best time to get bulbs into the ground is when soil temperatures fall below 60 degrees F. That generally occurs in October.

Bulbs can be planted in beds, in rock gardens, in groundcovers or around trees and shrubs. Good drainage is essential for all spring flowering bulbs. If your soil is mostly clay, mix in an organic material such as peat moss or compost in amounts up to 25 percent in volume.

Fertilization improves bulb performance and encourages bulbs to flower for several years without replacement. Two fertilizing methods are recommended for spring flowering bulbs. One method utilizes a sulfur-coated, slow-release complete fertilizer. It's applied to the rooting area at the rate of one rounded tablespoon per square foot at fall planting time.

The second method uses an application of 8-8-8 (one level tablespoon) or 10-10-10 (one rounded teaspoon) fertilizer per square foot in the fall.

Place the bulbs in the bed, tips pointing upward and spaced according to directions. Cover them with half the conditioned soil and water the area thoroughly. Add the remaining conditioned soil and soak the area again.

Cover the planted area with a 3 inch layer of mulch. Woodchips, peat moss or bark are good choices because they don't mat and prevent water and nutrients from soaking into the soil. Water during dry spells.