



# growit

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## For spring blooming bulbs, plant in the fall



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 com-

post 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.

## Take Advantage of the Benefits of Fall Planting

While spring is typically the busy garden season, fall is the best time for planting landscape perennials, shrubs and trees for many reasons.

Fall brings more than glorious color and crisp mornings - it also brings the best time for planting new perennials, shrubs and trees in the garden. Here are a few reasons why fall planting is so beneficial.

### Planting perennials in the fall gives them time to establish healthy root systems.

New perennials planted in the spring must survive summer heat and stress with very young root systems while still producing enough nutrients to support months of growth and flowering. By planting shrubs and trees in the fall, roots have a chance to grow all autumn, and most of the winter as well, without having to supply nourishment for the busy growing season as well. Roots of fall planted plants will continue growing as long as the ground temperature is above 50 degrees Fahrenheit which can give them several months of head start growth time.

### Plants put in the ground in the fall need less water to establish.

All plants need plenty of water while they are in the "establishment" stage and growing strong root systems through the surrounding soil. However, by planting in the fall gardeners will conserve water. Plants themselves use less water since photosynthesis is slowed by shorter days. Evaporation rates slow down during the fall so water in the soil lasts longer as well.

### Fall is a great time to find garden specials, bargains, discount plants and package deals.

Many gardening companies offer fall specials on

trees, shrubs and otherwise pricey perennials during the fall planting season to encourage gardeners to plant at that time. An autumn gardener can save hundreds on a large landscape project by planning during the heat of summer and buying their large plants during fall savings bargains!

### Perennials and bulbs can be planted together without damaging established root systems.

Instead of digging through perennial plants that have been in the ground for several months to layer bulbs, a fall gardener can plant everything at the same time. Not only will this save transplant shock on sensitive perennials, but time and energy for the autumn gardener as well!

Having established that fall planting can be very beneficial. There are certain plants that don't take kindly to later planting. Ground covers generally prefer to be planted earlier in the year rather than later fall planting.

Take advantage of the garden discounts and plant bargains available, the wonderful weather autumn days bring, and the fabulous fall color outdoors and tackle many of your gardening projects this fall!



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