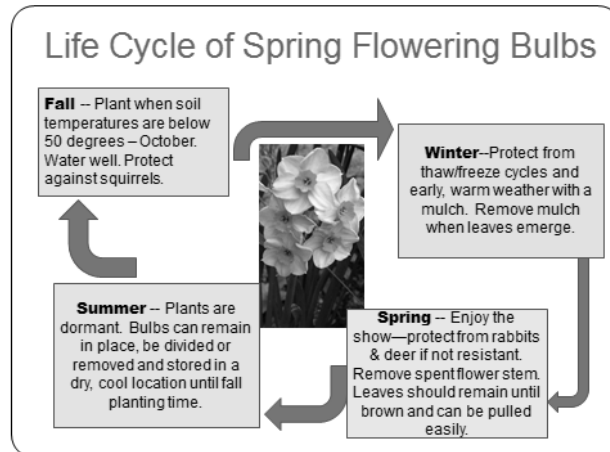




Bulb Basics

- **Benefits** – what to like: low maintenance, Add structure to mixed borders, often bloom when other perennials are quiet, large variety, good cut or dried flowers, many are pest and disease resistant
- **Types:** Bulbs are divided into major (Tulips, Daffodils) and minor (Muscari, Scilla)



- **When and Where to Plant:** temps are consistently cool (55 degrees) and until ground freezes, prefer moist, well-drained soil in growing season and drier soil when dormant, remove all debris and/or cover area to discourage squirrels
- **How to Plant:** General rule plant spring bulbs at a depth 3 times their height, space at least 3-4 times the width of the bulb apart, plant point-end down or on its side, blood meal or grit on top of soil can also discourage pests, water
- **Tools that Really Work:** Auger – attaches to your drill, use a 12” or shorter length, soil knife or dibble – for minor bulbs like grape hyacinth, crocus and snowdrops, bulb planter – look for one that is welded together rather than attached with bolts or rivets
- **Maintenance:** prevent premature spring thaws with a mulch and remove it when temps are hovering just above freezing or bulb growth emerges, best time to fertilize is after first hard frost, next best – early spring when leaves emerge with a low nitrogen fertilizer, divide if reduced blooms or let naturalize
- **Spring Bulb Failure to Perennialize:** Bulb species not adaptable to climatic zone, poor drainage, pH greatly exceed the 6-7 range, site had high salt content and roots burned, bulbs not properly fertilized to maintain bulb size, site had improper light for adequate photosynthesis, foliage was not allowed to remain or was bent over, heavy freezing damage occurred, serious diseases, prolonged drought affect plant growth
- **Many Seasons of Interest**
 - Early Spring (April to June): Anemone, Daffodils, Tulips, Fritillaria, Muscari, Trillium, Scilla
 - Summer (June-August): Alliums
 - Fall (Sept-October): Colchicum, Autumn Crocus
 - Winter (Nov-March): Amaryllis, Crocus, and many spring bulbs that can be forced

Popular Bulb Profiles

- **Narcissus:** Reliable for naturalizing and long-lived, any soil type --prefer slightly alkaline conditions, moist in spring, drier during dormant period, sun or dappled shade, add organic matter to improve drainage, excess nitrogen can result in lots of leaves and no flowers, deer resistant
- **Tulips:** thrive in fertile well-drained soil, short-lived perennial, unless planted deeply (10-12") bulbs can divide into several smaller ones which are too small to flower
- **Alliums:** plant in the fall among dry loving perennials, prefer full sun to light shade & well-drained soil, feed with 10-10-10 fertilized 3 times a year: early spring when foliage emerges, summer when the blooms fade, fall during final clean-up, deer and rabbit resistant
- Bulbs in Shade Garden (in order from early to late): Snowdrops (*Galanthus*), Crocus, Siberian Squill (*Scilla Siberica*), Winter Aconite (*Eranthus*), Glory-of-the-snow (*Chionodoxa*), Daffodils (*Narcissus*), Double Grape Hyacinth (*Muscari*), Tulips, Wood Hyacinth (*Scilla companulata*), Alliums

Forcing Bulbs

- Need 12-14 weeks of cooling
- Good bulbs for forcing: Hyacinths, Tulips, Daffodils, Irises, Muscari
- Paperwhite Narcissus & Amaryllis need no cooling period
- Paperwhites with strong stems & milder fragrance: 'Israel', 'Nazareth', 'Jerusalem' or 'Bethlehem
- Try 1 part alcohol to 7 parts water to control growth



Bulb Resources

- North Central Regional Extension Publication No. 399 "Growing and Using Annuals and Bulbs"
- Bulb.com (website of the International Bulb Centre)
- [The Garden Book for Wisconsin](#), Melinda Myers
- [All about Bulbs](#), Marty Ross
- [Alliums; The Ornamental Onions](#), Dilys Davies
- www.planttalk.org
(Colorado State University Extension)
- www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com



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