

# PLANTING TULIPS

Tulips, a favorite in the garden, are known as harbingers of spring. Their beautiful flowers and vibrant colors are a refreshing change after a cold and dreary winter. Read on for information on how to best grow tulips.

## When is the best time to plant tulips?

October is the ideal time to plant tulips, daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs. When planted in October, spring-flowering bulbs have sufficient time to develop a good root system before the ground freezes in winter. If the ground isn't frozen, tulips and other spring-flowering bulbs can be planted as late as late November and early December.

## What are good planting sites for tulips?

Tulips perform best in partial to full sun. Planting sites should receive at least six hours of direct sun per day. Tulip bulbs also need a well-drained, fertile soil.

## How deep should I plant tulips?

Plant spring-flowering bulbs at a depth equal to three to four times their maximum bulb diameter. Accordingly, large bulbs, such as tulips and daffodils, should be planted 6 to 8 inches deep. Plant smaller bulbs, such as crocuses and grape hyacinths, 3 to 4 inches deep. Space tulips and daffodils 6 inches apart. A 3-inch-spacing is adequate for crocuses, grape hyacinths and other small bulbs.

## Which are the best tulips for perennializing?

Most modern tulip varieties bloom well for only three or four years. However, there are some tulip types (classes) that bloom well over a longer time period.

Darwin hybrid tulips are generally the longest blooming hybrid tulip. Darwin hybrid tulips are prized for their large, brilliant flowers. Flowers are available in shades of red, pink, orange, yellow and white. Blooms are borne on stems that are up to 30 inches tall. Darwin hybrid tulips bloom in mid-season.

Fosteriana tulips also perennialize well. They are noted for their large, elongated flowers. Flowers appear in early spring on 10- to 20-inch-tall stems. Foliage is typically green or gray-green. However, a few varieties have mottled or striped foliage. Fosteriana tulips are also known as Emperor tulips.

Species tulips are generally the longest-lived tulips. Some naturalize when given favorable growing conditions. Species tulips include wild tulip species and varieties developed from these wild species. Species tulips are usually smaller than most modern tulips. They also have smaller flowers. Species tulips are excellent choices for rock gardens and in the front of beds and borders. They are also sometimes referred to as botanical tulips.

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