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Bulb Forcing Guide

Wouldn't it be a cheery welcome to have pots of blooming tulips or daffodils many weeks earlier than normally seen - you can have spring come early by following these simple steps.

Cooling Period

- Bulbs must be exposed to temperatures between 35 - 45 degrees for a minimum of 12 - 15 weeks. If not cooled long enough, stems will be short and flowers may abort.
- Cold frames, unheated out buildings and unheated basements work well for storing potted bulbs during cooling process.
- Bulbs can be stored in the refrigerator for several weeks before potting. Store in mesh/paper bags with holes to allow ventilation. Avoid storing bulbs with ripening fruit and vegetables. (Some bulbs are poisonous, so this method is not recommended for households with small children)
- Paperwhites & Hyacinth can be forced without the cooling period.

Bulb Potting

- Bulbs can be potted between mid-September and December. Mid-September plantings for late December flowers, Mid-October plantings for February flowers, Mid-November plantings for March & April flowers.
- Use a well draining potting soil and make sure pots are large enough to allow at least 1-2" of soil beneath the bulb. Bulbs should be planted at the same depth they would be planted outdoors
- Bulbs being used for forcing do not require much fertilizer. We recommend bone meal or bulb food or a general purpose organic fertilizer.
- Only use containers with drainage holes to keep bulbs from rotting.
- One 6" pot can hold up to 6 Daffodils or Paperwhites; 6 Tulips; 3 Hyacinth; or 15 Crocuses.

Bulb Potting continued...

- Bulbs with a flat side (such as tulips) should be planted with the flat side facing the outside of the container.
- Daffodil, Tulip & Hyacinth bulbs can be planted so the tip of the bulb is exposed; smaller bulbs should be covered completely.
- Exception: Hyacinth, Daffodils and Paperwhites can be grown in decorative gravel, pebbles, etc. with water maintained at a level just below the bulb. This however exhausts the bulb and they are best discarded after this method of forcing.

Bulb Forcing

- When brought out of the cooling, place potted bulbs in indirect light in a cool location (Temperature between 60-65 degrees)
- As shoots grow and green up, give them more light and a warmer location. Flower buds will appear in three to four weeks.
- Keep soil evenly moist during growth and bloom.
- Keep Hyacinth & Tulips in indirect light until shoots are 4-6" tall. A pot inverted over the top of the bulbs works well to speed up this process.
- Cooler temperatures when buds begin to show color will help prolong flowering.

After Care

After you've enjoyed your pots of spring color; plant bulbs outdoors in flower beds for upcoming years. When the flowers die, cut off only the flower stalks - green leaves stay on to develop food for the bulbs to store. Remove leaves after they yellow.