



Columbia Nursery

Planting & Caring for Fall Bulbs

Planting fall bulbs for spring blooms is one of the most rewarding garden tasks. Watching flowers emerge after a long winter feels like magic!

Choosing a Site:

- Select a spot with full sun or at least sun in early spring.
- Plant bulbs near entryways or patios where you'll enjoy them daily.
- Mix bulbs into perennial beds to add early color before other plants bloom.

Preparing the Bed:

- Improve the top 6–10 inches of soil with compost, peat moss, or manure.
- Ensure good drainage, especially for spring moisture.
- In new beds, add a balanced fertilizer (16-16-16) or packaged bulb food.
- In established beds, place a small handful of bone meal in each planting hole.

Buying Bulbs:

- Look for large, firm, heavy bulbs free of mold or green growth (except paperwhite narcissus).
- Avoid bulbs that are soft, lightweight, or already sprouting.
- Remember: Deer love tulips but usually avoid daffodils and crocus.
- Columbia Nursery offers first-choice bulbs for the best spring display.

Planting Bulbs:

- Plant bulbs when soil temperature drops to 50°–55°F (late September to early October).
- Depth rule: Plant bulbs at 4 times their height (6–8 inches for tulips and daffodils).
- Place bulbs pointed end up. For Fritillaria, plant on their side to prevent rot.

Design Tips:

- Plant bulbs in clusters or groups for the best display.
- Use 5 bulbs per hole for large bulbs, and 6–9 bulbs for smaller ones.
- Avoid straight lines—plant in natural-looking clumps or staggered rows for visual interest.

Fall Bulbs for Zones 3-5 (Northwest Montana):

- Daffodils (Narcissus)
- Tulips (Select cold-hardy varieties)
- Crocus
- Hyacinths (Hyacinthus orientalis)



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- Allium (Ornamental Onions)
- Snowdrops (Galanthus)
- Chionodoxa (Glory of the Snow)
- Scilla (Squill)
- Fritillaria (Checkered Lily and Crown Imperial)
- Eranthis (Winter Aconite)

These bulbs are well-suited for Northwest Montana's cold winters and will thrive in USDA Zones 3-5.

Need Help?

Visit Columbia Nursery for high-quality bulbs, fertilizers, and expert planting advice. We're here to help you create a stunning spring display!