

Time to plant tulips

## Fireworks in spring!

Do you want your landscape to sparkle next spring? The first step is to plant tulips this fall.

After we all endure yet another dreary winter, our tulips will burst out of the ground and put on a display of cheerful colors all over our landscapes. No other flower in spring can match tulips for their dazzling array of colors. It's just like fireworks in spring!

Start with good quality bulbs. Bulbs should be solid, disease-free, and have their buds intact.

Always remember the bigger the bulb, the better. The biggest tulip bulbs will be 12+ cm in diameter (the size is often listed if you look carefully on the label). The 11/12-cm tulips are fine, but be careful with the small 10/11 cm in size. Their plants will be less vigorous and may not bloom longer than a single year.

There are many types of tulips to choose from. My advice:



take chances, explore, and add a new variety to your garden this fall! You will be delighted next spring with awe-inspiring beauty.

Among non-traditional types, the Emperor series bloom very early. 'Red Emperor' is extremely popular—it looks great in a display with golden daffodils!

Kaufmanniana, Greigii, and botanical tulips have a delicate, natural beauty. Some even look like water lilies!

The Darwin hybrids, including 'Olympic Flame' (shown at left) and 'Apeldoorn' are among the easiest to grow. A bed of these tulips will last for years longer than most other tulips.

Beds of "single early", "single late", and "triumph" tulips will also last for several years.

Many other types of tulips, including the fanciful parrot, fringed, and peony types are very short lived. Some gardeners treat them like annuals. Nevertheless, I'm sure that if you saw one of these fanciful tulips ('Angelique' peony tulip is shown at right), you would be fascinated with their bright colors and showy petals. They are truly wonderful!

When designing a flower bed, select just a few varieties of bulbs and then plant at least six to twelve bulbs of each variety. For a dramatic effect, plant the bulbs in clumps or drifts, not in rows.

Tulips demand a well-drained soil. Plant tulip bulbs about six

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inches deep. Sprinkle a bulb fertilizer containing timed-release nitrogen over the soil surface and lightly work it in. Bonemeal is no longer recommended since it is not a complete fertilizer; furthermore, it attracts dogs, squirrels, and mice that dig up the bulbs.

Water the bulbs thoroughly to start them growing. The fertilizer you apply this fall will help develop a strong root system as well as support the blooming and ripening of the bulb in spring.

After planting, sit back and wait until the snow melts. Your work this fall will be rewarded with brilliant colors next spring! 

