




MINNESOTA GARDEN DESIGN

HOW TO PLANT FLOWER BULBS IN MINNESOTA

Tagged under:

[Autumn \(category/categories/autumn/\)](#)

Fall-planted flower bulbs are among the first signs of spring. Some will even bloom when there is still a crust of snow on the ground. Once planted, most bulbs will require little maintenance and should reward you with a show of color every spring.

To enjoy these flowers in the spring you must plan ahead. In the Twin Cities, where average date for the ground to freeze is December 8th ([according to MN DNR \(https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/summaries_and_publications/soilfreeze.html\)](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/summaries_and_publications/soilfreeze.html)), **aim to get your bulbs in the ground between mid-September and mid-October.** 

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The ideal conditions for planting fall bulbs in Minnesota gardens is when evening temperatures are between 40° - 50°. It's best to get your bulbs in the ground 6-8 weeks before the ground freezes, giving them plenty of time for them to develop a strong root system.

However, if it's Halloween or Thanksgiving and you still have a bag of bulbs in your garden shed, plant them anyway. Unlike seeds, bulbs won't keep indefinitely. It's better to take your chances than lose them forever.



DESIGN YOUR GARDEN WHICH BULBS GO WHERE?

As the Dutch say, "bulbs don't like wet feet." Avoid areas where water collects, like at the bottom of a hill or the end of a downspout.

Most bulbs like 6-8 hours of sun. In the spring, even areas that are shady in the summer tend to get a lot of light before the trees fill in. Plant early bloomers in these areas for a welcome pop of color.

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Select and buy your bulbs. Pick bulbs that are large and firm with papery skins. Many enthusiasts order specific varieties from online catalogs. If you are a first-timer, most garden centers will have a variety of bulbs to choose from.

Tulips (*Tulipa*), Daffodils (*Narcissus*), Grape Hyacinth (*Muscari*), irises, Crocuses (*Crocus*), Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), Glory of the Snow (*Chionodoxa forbesii*), Wind Flower (*Anemone blanda*), Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*), and Guinea Hen Flower (*Fritillaria meleagris*) all make great additions to Minnesota garden designs.

It'll be hard to decide which ones to buy when they are all right there in front of you. It's best to go with a list.

Bunch plants together to intentionally create solid masses of colors.

In the fall, all bulbs look the same. Here's what you'll see in the spring.

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IN THE GARDEN

A FUN ACTIVITY ON A WARM FALL DAY

Prepare the soil so that it is loose and workable. If needed, amend the soil with some compost or peat moss. Remove any weeds or rocks.

Read the label on your bulbs for recommended planting depth. In general, plant large bulbs about 8" deep and small ones about 5" deep. Set the bulb in the hole pointy side up or root side down. This is easier with some bulbs than others. But not to worry... In most cases, if you don't get it right – the flower will still find its way up.

Backfill the hole and lightly compress the soil. Water thoroughly after planting, but there is no need to water continuously in Minnesota's climate.

Cover with mulch. 3-4 inches of dry leaves, grass clippings, hay, or straw will do it. Mulch will insulate the ground and keep conditions constant below the surface.

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NEXT YEAR...

ENJOY YOUR GARDEN

In the spring, rake back the mulch in order to expose the new shoots. Keep a little handy in case you need it to protect your plant babies from a surprise frost.

After blooming, cut back the flower stalks, but leave the leaves in order to allow the bulb to store enough energy for the next growing season.

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PLANT TULIPS IN YOUR LAWN

Last fall, we tried something a little different at Southview. Instead of planting our tulips in the garden, we planted them right in the lawn!

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To try this at home, poke a hole in your lawn at the right depth and carefully plant the bulb right side up. Sunny spots only! Pick a spot you won't need to mow for a bit. Works best with crocus and tulips.

MORE INFORMATION:

[Digging in: Not-so-minor spring bulbs to try \(http://www.startribune.com/not-so-minor-spring-bulbs-to-try/120718114/\)](http://www.startribune.com/not-so-minor-spring-bulbs-to-try/120718114/). Shirley Mah Kooyman, Star Tribune.

[Tips for Planting Spring Bulbs \(http://statebystategardening.com/state.php/mn/newsletter-stories/tips_for_planting_spring_bulbs/\)](http://statebystategardening.com/state.php/mn/newsletter-stories/tips_for_planting_spring_bulbs/). Neil Moran, Minnesota Gardener Magazine.

[Plant hardy bulbs for spring beauty](http://www3.extension.umn.edu/county/clay/garden/article/plant-hardy-bulbs-spring-beauty-0)

[\(http://www3.extension.umn.edu/county/clay/garden/article/plant-hardy-bulbs-spring-beauty-0\)](http://www3.extension.umn.edu/county/clay/garden/article/plant-hardy-bulbs-spring-beauty-0).

University of Minnesota Extension Office.

[How to Plant Fall Flower Bulbs \(https://www.americanmeadows.com/how-to-plant-flower-bulbs\)](https://www.americanmeadows.com/how-to-plant-flower-bulbs).

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(minneapolis-landscape-maintenance/get-help-with-fall-maintenance-and-landscape-care)

Prepare your outdoor living space for winter with fall maintenance services.

FALL MAINTENANCE SERVICES

- Comprehensive seasonal landscape care
- Refresh summer plantings with fall color displays
- Protect beds with mulch and leaf clean-up
- Adjust irrigation and drainage for cooler weather
- Guard against weeds, pests, and disease before winter
- Prepare your lawn and gardens for a healthy spring return

Call (651) 203-3000 (tel:6512033000) to Schedule Fall Services Now!

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Business Hours

Weekdays 8 AM to 5 PM

Closed Sat and Sun



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