

11. Bulbs

Bulbs will last for years if properly looked after. They have a similar growing cycle to perennials. They flower, die down and then return to a dormant resting state.

Annual Schedule

Early Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadhead
Late Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadhead • Leave daffodil foliage to die down naturally • Feed after flowering
Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lift and divide spring flowering bulbs • Water during dry spells
Autumn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadhead Summer flowering bulbs • Allow leaves to die back naturally • Feed after flowering
Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mulch

Further Information

A bulbous plant refers loosely to a plant with an underground storage organ. Bulbs are essentially modified, compacted, fleshy leaves; corms are made up of swollen stem base tissue and are more solid than bulbs and tubers are swollen, often irregularly shaped roots or underground stems. Bulbous plants contain starchy material which sustains the plant during the dormant period allowing them to be dug up from the garden and stored somewhere weatherproof over the winter

Basic Rules:

- Buy plump, firm and disease- free bulbs
- Plant at two or three times the depth of the bulb
- Plant spring flowering bulbs in autumn and autumn flowering bulbs in spring
- Prepare the ground carefully. Bulbs require need good drainage – they will rot in waterlogged conditions. Add grit or sand to wet soils to improve drainage
- Plant in close groups. Plant bulbs at a maximum distance of two or three times the width of the bulb.
- Plant in drifts rather than rows for a natural look. Group varieties together.
- After flowering remove the spent flowerheads.
- Allow leaves to remain intact for at least six weeks. Resist the urge to knot the leaves as this prevents nutrients reaching the bulb.
- Water during dry spells and feed to build up the bulb for the following year.
- As with perennials when clumps become congested bulbous plants will produce less flowers. Lift after flowering, select the best bulbs and replant. Little bulblets or cormlets can be planted in pots and allowed to grow – ready to plant out the following year.