



Spring Flowering Bulbs **Melissa King 19/05/10**

Two Unique Ways to Grow Spring Flowering Bulbs

May is your last chance to get spectacular spring flowering bulbs like daffodils, tulips and hyacinths in the ground for vibrant colour. Here's two unique ways to grow them!

1. Nothing but water and pebbles!

Try growing daffodils in a saucer with nothing but water and pebbles. My grandmother has had success growing hyacinths this way too!

- Fill a saucer with pebbles and place the bulbs pointy end up on top of the pebbles. The bulbs will topple over a bit, so cram them tightly together.
- Slowly fill the saucer with water, until the water level is just below the base of the bulbs (to avoid them rotting).
- Put the saucer in a cool, dark spot like under the house or beneath some trees, until the tips of the bulbs start to grow. Then move it into a well-lit position.

Note: When bulbs are grown this way they tend to exhaust themselves in one season, so you may need to treat them as annuals.

2. Plant in Layers

Potted bulbs make a decorative feature on the patio or balcony. You can extend the flowering display by planting your bulbs in layers. Choose bulbs with different flowering times like early daffodils and late flowering tulips to create a succession of colour. Bulbs can usually be planted closer together in containers than in the garden, but try not to let the bulbs touch each other or the sides of the pot. Good drainage is also essential, so use a quality potting mix.

Try this recipe for an explosion of spring colour:

Put a good layer of potting mix at the bottom of the pot and in between each layer and try not to plant the bulbs directly over the top of each other.

Bottom layer: Tulip 'Ad Rem' – a stunning red tulip with a yellow edge

Middle layer: Grape hyacinths

Top layer: 'Tete A Tete' Miniature Daffodils

Tips:

- Choose deep containers that complement or set off the flower colour.
- Plant the top of the container with annuals like pansies, violas and lobelia to extend colour.

- Once the bulbs have finished flowering you can move the pot out of sight to hide the dying bulb foliage.

Bulb Growing Tips

- Most spring flowering bulbs prefer open, sunny positions and good drainage.
- In general bulbs can be planted 2-3 times as deep as they are wide (5-10 cm is a good rough guide). Bulbs are usually planted with the pointy end upwards. The exception is ranunculi, which should be grown claws down.

Here's a great tip - If you're unsure which way to plant your bulbs, plant them sideways! They will turn the correct way up as they emerge.

- Feed them with a complete bulb food at planting time and again when they finish flowering
- When your bulbs have finished flowering allow the leaves to die down naturally. Removing the foliage prematurely can jeopardise next year's flowering.

Availability: Spring flowering bulbs will be available until the end of May from Bunnings and garden centres. If you prefer to do a bit of armchair gardening visit www.gardenexpress.com.au and get the bulbs delivered straight to your door!