

How to plant summer-flowering bulbs

When to plant?

Summer-flowering bulbs, corms and tubers can be planted in the spring – as soon as the danger of ground frost is past – until the end of May.

Where to plant?

Summer-flowering bulbs prefer a sunny spot, either in the garden or in containers.

How to plant?

Summer-flowering bulbs can be planted a single hole made with a trowel or in a large trench or bed.

How deep?

The general rule of thumb is to plant the bulbs, corms or tubers twice as deep as the bulb is tall. Exceptions to this rule are begonias and dahlias which should be planted just under the soil surface. The planting diagram gives you the planting depths for the various types.

How far apart?

For small bulbs, 4 inches is a good distance apart. For the gladiolus 5 inches, the begonia 10 inches, the lily 12 inches, and the dahlia even 16 inches. If you want a solid color effect, you can safely plant the bulbs somewhat closer together.

The soil

Before planting, you should loosen the soil thoroughly. Then, level out the soil somewhat. You can plant summer-flowering bulbs in any kind of soil as long as it drains properly. Adding fertilizer before the first flowering is unnecessary. If the soil is heavy clay, it would be advisable to mix some sand or compost for drainage into the upper layer. For containers, you can use garden compost or potting soil.

Water

To develop roots quickly, summer-flowering bulbs need thorough watering immediately after planting. During a dry spring period, you will have to keep the soil in the garden or in the containers moist, but not soggy.



Lily



Gladioli



Tips

A few suggestions to obtain the prettiest results:

1. A summery effect: summer-flowering bulbs bloom in containers and pots
2. Hanging baskets are also just right for summer-flowering bulbs
3. Color in the garden all summer long: take the various flowering periods into consideration
4. The most beautiful solid areas of color are obtained by using the right planting distance. Dahlias, like many other summer-flowering bulbs, are suitable for use as cut flowers.
5. Summery borders: perennials combined with summer-flowering bulbs.



Begonia

Dahlia



Summery flowerboxes

Many summer-flowering bulbs, corms and tubers are perfect for planting in containers and pots where they're sure to give your balcony or patio a summery touch. Good candidates are begonias, low-growing dahlias, Gloxinia, Eranthis, Calla and Oxalis. Flower bulbs can also be planted in all kinds of containers – as long as the containers allow excess water to drain away. This means being sure that they have a drainage hole that you can then cover with a pot shard or two. In containers, the bulbs can be planted more closely together than in the garden. Also make sure that the containers are deep enough so that the bulbs will not dry out. Water frequently and remove any faded flowers.



Cut flowers

Several summer-flowering bulbs are suitable for use as cut flowers. Highly recommended for this purpose are gladioli, certain dahlias (such as cactus and decorative dahlias) and lilies. To create a cutting garden, choose a sheltered spot in the garden. Plant the flower bulbs a bit closer together here so that they will support one another during their growth. Once again, take flowering periods into consideration. By planting summer-flowering bulbs that flower at different periods, you can have freshly cut flowers in your home all through the summer.

