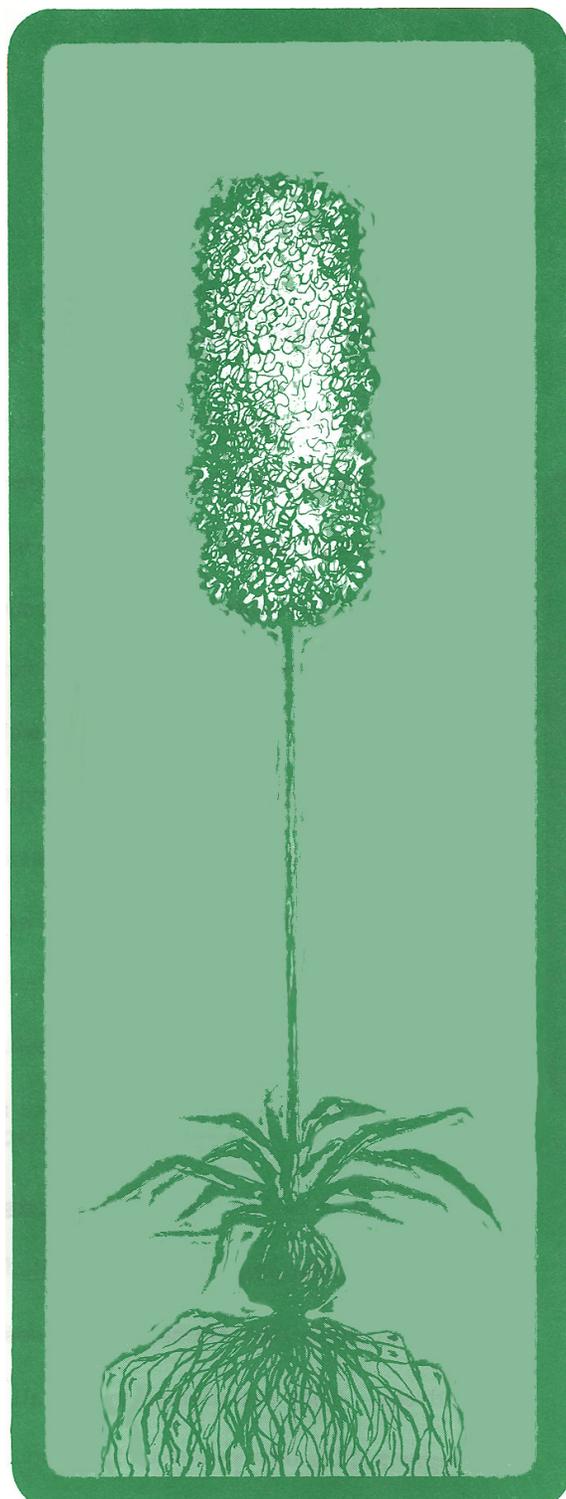


Growing Flowers from Bulbs

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GROWING FLOWERS FROM BULBS

If you like flowers and enjoy watching them grow, this 4-H project is for you. Growing flowers is no mystery if you “learn by doing” as the 4-H slogan says.

In the flower growing project you will learn about flowers from bulbs. You will learn how to:

- Choose bulbs that will grow well.
- Get the soil ready for planting.
- Plant 12 or more bulbs (at least two kinds).
- Keep the plants watered and weeded.
- Care for cut flowers.
- Compare the quality of flowers.
- Give a demonstration or make an exhibit.

ABOUT BULBS

Bulbs that grow and bloom in the spring are daffodils, tulips, narcissus, hyacinths, bulb irises, crocuses, and snowdrops. They are planted in the fall and come up in the spring.

Summer bulbs are gladiolus and tuberous begonias. They are planted in the spring and bloom all summer.

All flowers from bulbs come in many kinds and colors.

Bulbs are sometimes called “good natured” because they are easy to grow. This is because a bulb is a storehouse of food.

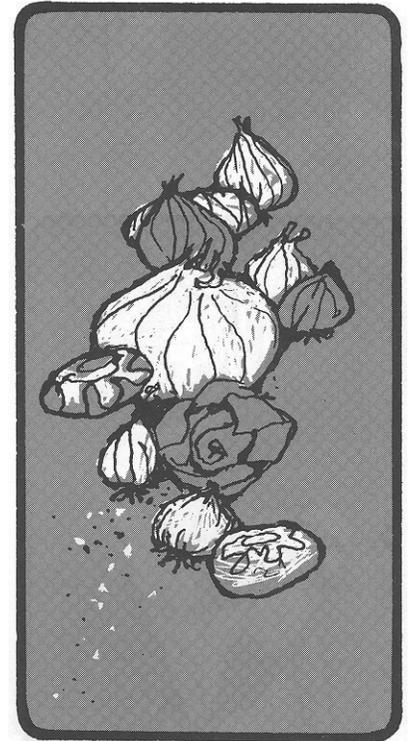
The leaves do their work of making living matter from the plant foods in the soil and air. This living matter is stored through the winter months in the bulbs.

Bulbs have the habit of storing food from one season to the other because of the conditions in which they grow. They are able to make plenty of food supplies during the summer months when there is warmth, moisture, and rich soil. But, because they like to open their flowers in the sun shine they store their food during the winter and wait until spring and summer to bloom.

CHOOSING BULBS

Choose bulbs that are firm and solid and have no mold or spots. Large bulbs are usually better than small ones. Choose colors that will go with the rest of the garden or yard.

If you buy bulbs, buy from a dealer who sells good bulbs. Cheap bulbs usually have poor quality. Your leader can help you find a garden store or nursery. Be sure to avoid bulbs of invasive species, which are readily available on the Internet. Check the Washington State Noxious Weed page for current listings: <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov>.

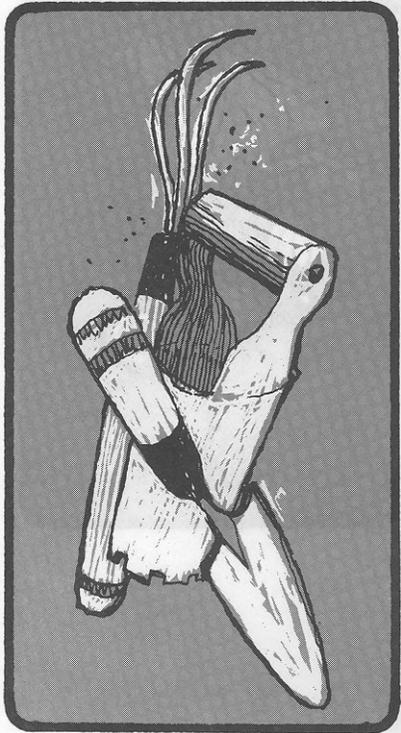


WHEN AND WHERE TO PLANT

Spring-flowering bulbs should be planted before the first of November. Summer-flowering bulbs should be planted in late May (begonia) or early June (gladiolus).

Bulbs grow best where they can get lots of sunshine and plenty of moisture. Ask your parents to help you choose a place.

Bulbs can be grown in clumps or in rows. Keep in mind the color, height, and blooming time of the plants so they will go with the rest of the garden or yard. Look at the table on page 5.



PLANTING BULBS

Use a shovel, trowel, or dibble to create a hole for each bulb. Some bulbs are planted deeper than others. Look at the table on page 5 to see how deep to plant the kinds of bulbs you have. Then set the bulbs, pointed ends up, firmly into the ground.

Plant bulbs close together (3 or 5 inches apart) if you want thick masses of flowers. Plant them farther apart (6 or 8 inches) for rows.

After the bulbs are covered with soil, soak the soil with water to settle it around the bulbs. Mulch the area with organic mulch to a depth of 2-4 inches. Do not add fertilizers or other amendments unless a soil test report indicates a nutrient deficiency.

LEARNING ABOUT BULBS

NAME	COLOR	HEIGHT	BLOOMING TIME	PLANTING DEPTH (top of soil to top of bulb)
Plant these in FALL:				
1. Crocuses	Blue Purple Yellow White	4 in.	Very early spring	3 in.
2. Daffodils	White Yellow Pink	12-16 in.	Early spring	4-6 in.
3. Hyacinths	Blue White Pink Yellow	6-10 in.	Early spring	4-6 in.
4. Irises, bulb	White Yellow Blue Mixed	18-24 in.	Early summer	6 in.
5. Narcissus	White Yellow Pink	12-16 in.	Early spring	4-6 in.
6. Snowdrops	White	6-12 in.	Very early spring	3 in.
7. Tulips	Red Pink Yellow Mixed	12-14 in.	Late spring	4-6 in.
Plant these in SPRING:				
1. Begonia, tuberous	Red Yellow Pink White	10-16 in.	Summer	1/2 in.
2. Gladiolus	White Yellow Orange Pink	36-48 in.	Summer	2-4 in.

CARING FOR THE PLANTS

Mulching keeps the bulbs from alternately freezing and thawing in the winter. During the rest of the year, mulch reduces weed growth, moderates soil temperature, and protects soil tith (consistency).

If weeds appear, remove as needed. Weeds rob plants of food and water. If your plants have disease or insects ask your county agent what to do.

CUTTING FLOWERS

Cut flowers in the morning or in the evening. Use a sharp knife to cut the stems. A pair of scissors crushes the stem instead of cutting it sharply.

Cut the stem at an angle to leave a larger area for the stem to absorb water.

Put the flowers immediately into warm water about the temperature of a bath. Warm water moves through the stem easier than cold.

AFTER BLOOMING

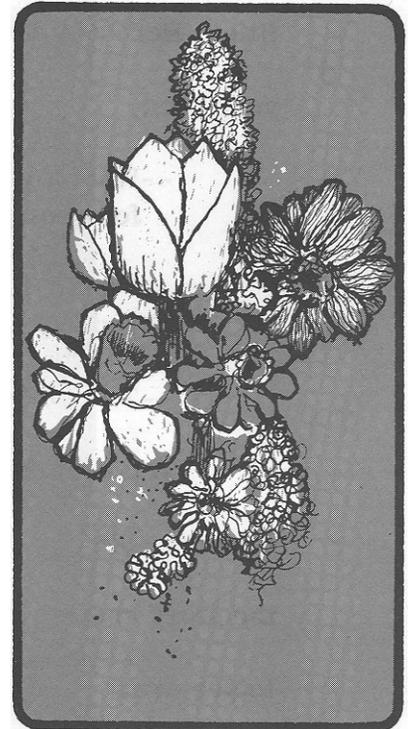
After the flowers fade in the garden, cut them off so that seeds will not form. Seeds take stored food from the bulbs.

Do not cut the leaves. Let them die naturally- the green leaves build next year's bulbs.

Digging and replanting bulbs is not necessary for many species; they will reproduce vegetatively below ground. You can dig up and divide bulb groups when they become too dense.

COMPARING QUALITY

Flowers are judged by the way they look. Plants should have good color and strong stems. There should be few signs of insects, disease, or injury on the flowers, leaves, or stems.



DEMONSTRATIONS AND EXHIBITS

A demonstration or exhibit will help you show other people how to do something you have learned. They can be made for 4-H club meetings, school projects, community programs, or for your family and friends.

Use plenty of action in a demonstration. Choose a short, catchy title. Here are some ideas, but you'll probably want to think of some of your own:

- What a Site (use a display of pictures, drawings, or a PowerPoint presentation to show why you chose the site for your planting).
- Plant Overcoat (show materials that can be used as mulches and explain how mulches help plants).
- The Cutting Angle (show how to cut flowers and care for them).

A good exhibit should attract attention and tell a story in a few minutes. Keep the exhibit simple. Use just enough lettering to tell the story and use color or movement to attract attention. Possible topics are:

- Winter Cover-ups (types of mulches)
- Good Start (choosing bulbs)
- Fairest of the Fair (judging flowers)



This publication was prepared with the assistance of Dr. Elwood W. Kalin, professor of horticulture, Washington State University, Pullman.

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