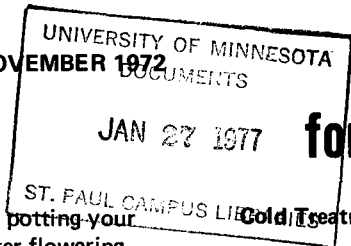


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HAROLD F. WILKINS



Forcing Spring Bulbs for Winter Beauty Indoors

October is the time of the year to begin potting your favorite spring bulbs to prepare them for winter flowering. Tulips, narcissus (daffodils), hyacinths, crocus, scillas, grape hyacinths, and lily of the valley can be forced into flower in late winter and early spring. A pot of tulips in the window sill in February can make the winter-worn gardener renew his desire to survive the winter.

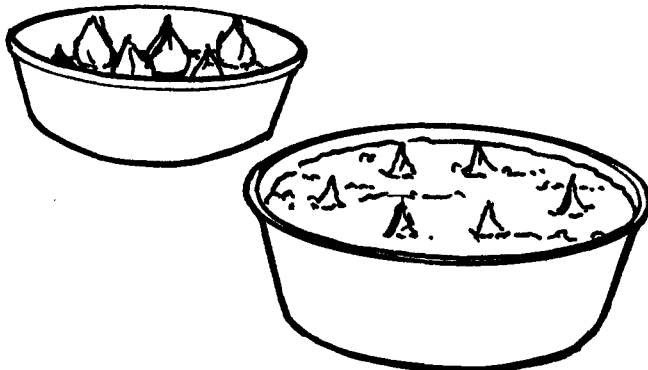
First, only top quality, good-sized bulbs can be used. Your neighborhood greenhouse operator will tell you the varieties that are best suited for forcing. Varieties which are commonly forced in greenhouses are listed.

Planting

Begin by potting the bulbs in clean and sterile clay or plastic pots. Normally the "noses" of the bulbs are exposed. Do not bury the bulbs. The soil should be an open mixture of good garden loam (3 parts), peat moss (2 parts), and sand (1 part). Do not worry about fertility, nor feeding bulbs, as they have enough stored food to flower.

Plant the bulbs close together in the pot. Usually 6 tulip bulbs, 3 hyacinths, 6 daffodils, or 15 crocus, will fit into a 6-inch pot. The flat side of the tulip bulb should be placed next to the rim of the pot since the largest leaf will always emerge and grow on this side, producing a more desirable looking pot.

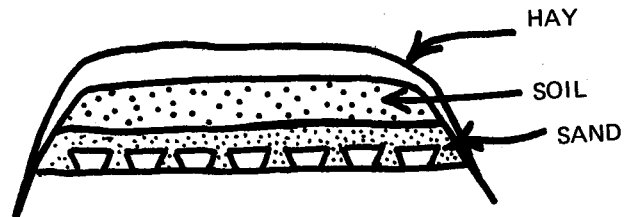
It is extremely important that bulbs be handled with care at all times. Never allow bulbs to be in temperatures above 65° F. When planting, the pot should be loosely fitted with soil, do not press the bulbs into the soil. Allow ¼ of an inch on top of the pot so plants can be watered. They should be watered immediately. The soil should never be allowed to dry.



Place bulbs in a pot partially filled with soil. Cover with soil, leaving the "noses" exposed. Water thoroughly.

Cold Treatment

Bulbs must be given a cold temperature treatment of 35° to 48° F. for a minimum of 12 to 13 weeks. This cold treatment can be provided by either a cold-frame, an unheated cellar, or even in a refrigerator's vegetable section. Naturally, with the latter situation the pots can be covered in a plastic bag with a few breathing holes. With cold-frames in Minnesota a deep mulch must be used. Cover the pots with 10 inches of soil, then cover with 10 inches of mulch (hay, sawdust, or leaves).



Potted bulbs can be given the necessary cold treatment by burying them for several weeks in an outdoor pit or coldframe.

Forcing

Mark your calendar to remind yourself when the first pots can be removed from storage and when forcing can begin. If planted October 1, bring the first pots into the home after Christmas. For a continuous supply of flowers, bring in a few pots at weekly intervals. On the average the bulbs will flower in 3 to 4 weeks. Closer to spring, they flower more rapidly.

In the home, place in a cool, sunny location. A temperature of 50° to 60° F. for the first week is preferred or until the shoots and leaves begin to expand. Then, they can be moved in to warmer locations such as the living room. Avoid direct sun. Hyacinths may have a tendency not to have an elongated flower stem and hence "stick" in the clasp of leaves. This problem may be overcome by placing the plants in the dark for a few days or placing a paper cone over the plants in order to "draw" the flower out of the bulbs. Naturally, warmer temperatures will result in rapid growth. Move the pots to a cool location at night if you desire. Once in flower, cool temperatures will prolong the flower life. Small pots of crocus can even be placed in the home refrigerator during the night.

Discard the plants after flowering as they normally are "spent" and only with great effort and time will they again flower satisfactorily.

Tulips, Hyacinths, Daffodils, and Crocus Suitable for Forcing

Type of bulbs	Time of flowering	
	January and February	March and April
TULIP	Red—Cassini, Paul Richter, Prominence, Christmas Marvel, Topscore, Trance, Charles, Bing Crosby, Olaf Yellow—Levant, Bellona White—Snow Star, Pax Salmon—Apricot Beauty Variegated—Madame Spoor, Merry Widow, Roland Pink—Preludium	Red—Couleur Cardinal, Red Queen, Utopia, Robinea Yellow—Makasar, Ornament White—Blizzard Orange—Orange Sun Variegated—Carl M. Bellman, Golden Eddy, United Europe, Edith Eddy, Paris Pink—Pink Supreme, Pearless Pink, Rose Beauty
HYACINTH	Red—Jan Bos Pink—Anna Marie, Eros, Lady Derby Blue—Ostara, Bismarck White—Carnegie, L'Innocence	Pink—Lady Derby, Pink Pearl, Marconi Blue—Ostara, Blue Giant, Perle Brillante White—Carnegie
DAFFODIL	King Alfred, Golden Harvest, Carlton	Gold Medal, Rembrandt, Van Sion, Geranium, Cheerfulness
CROCUS	Remembrance, Pickwick, Joan of Arc, Grand Maitre, Peter Pan	Pickwick, Peter Pan, Joan of Arc, Remembrance, Grand Maitre

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With a little care and effort, anyone can have a steady supply of bulb flowers from late January to April. Forcing bulbs into flowering can be a great pleasure and challenge for anyone who is interested in plants.

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Potted tulips add color and a touch of spring to the home.