

## **PLANTING FALL BULBS**

Fall bulbs feel so good - good when you plant them and good when they bloom so many months later. After growing spring flowering bulbs successfully for years I recently watched, in amazement the DVD 'Passion' from the International Flowerbulb Centre in Holland that removed any mystery that was remaining for me about planting bulbs. I have always meticulously planted my bulbs one at a time taking great care to be sure they were right side up and symmetrically situated...well no more! The DVD proved to me that I was taking far too much time and energy doing this. Imagine my surprise at seeing giant tractors digging large depressions in the soil and then dropping thousands of bulbs into these depressions. Every bulb bloomed regardless of whether it was planted upside down or right side up and the results were spectacular: there were rows and rows of continuous blocks of colour as far as the eye could see. Last fall when I was outside in the wet and cold planting my bulbs, I remembered the truth of the DVD and did everything very differently. I dug large depressions in the soil and dumped my bags of bulbs into that depression, along with a little bulb fertilizer, and then impatiently waited until this spring to see the results. Let, me tell you, the results were beautiful; I had showstopping groupings of spectacular colour all throughout my garden. So the secret is out now, any one of us can do this and all that is needed is some basic prep work in the garden to prepare the soil before you go crazy with the planting!

*And don't forget - the fabulous DVD 'Passion' that I mentioned will be given FREE with every Fall 2008 plant order!*

## **BULB PLANTING BASICS FOR EVERY GARDENER**

- Buy your bulbs from reputable companies that specialize in bulbs! You need to know that they have been stored properly and treated properly.
- Be sure to choose an area in the garden that is sunny as most bulbs need that to grow and develop energy to produce flowers in subsequent seasons.
- The area in which the bulbs are to be planted needs to have great drainage. Great drainage is the single most important reason for success and failure of bulbs. If your soil becomes saturated at any time the bulb needs to get rid of its moisture quickly or they will rot. With the ever changing weather patterns the late winter and early spring thaws cause a melting which is followed quickly by bitter cold spells. These often cause the bulbs underground to become moist and if the drainage is not super efficient and those same bulbs cannot rid themselves of the excess moisture they will freeze and rot.
- Take the time to prepare your soil for these bulbs and that means you may need to amend the soil so the bulbs have the best conditions to grow in. Bulbs like sandy well drained soil and you can achieve that by adding mulch, perlite, peat moss and/or a good potting soil into the existing soil in your planting area.
- At the time of planting add a little dry bulb fertilizer to the bottom of the hole, being sure to follow the directions on the package. Using too much of this can destroy the bulbs so be careful! This bulb fertilizer can be purchased from your local garden centres and will promote good root growth so the bulb is strong before the cold weather hits hard.



-Planting the bulbs in layers can really give you some interesting effects, so be creative and have some fun! You can start with the largest flowering bulb in the bottom of your hole and then add an inch or two of soil and then add some different coloured varieties or later blooming types. Cover these with another inch or two of soil and then sprinkle some early blooming variety on top of that and cover it with the remaining soil. You are only limited by your imagination.

-When the planting is finished give the area a good watering, being sure to let it soak down to the fertilizer to really get things started and the bulbs settled into place.

-As the cold weather starts to come you can add a few inches of mulch to the top of the areas that have been planted with bulbs. The mulch can be bark or aged compost or organic matter and it will serve to insulate the bulbs against rapid temperature and moisture change. Be sure to remove this mulch in the spring or it will hinder the initial growth of the bulbs.

Spring flowers are the cure for most ills and really are a wonderful sign that we have made it through another Canadian winter intact. I think everyone can recall a day when you think you can't take another minute of the cold or dark or the constant rain and then you see a snowdrop pushing its way up through the snow or a crocus you long forgot you planted, peeking up through the mountainous pile of winter debris. It's that moment that makes every effort in the fall worth it and you feel like the smartest person on the planet for all your efforts. The real beauty is that everyone gets to enjoy your gift, the postman, the garbage guys and the dedicated dog walker that sees what you've created and smiles. In those moments the winter seems so much shorter....

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