



CROCUS

how to plant

FIRST THINGS FIRST...

All our fully hardy plants are grown 'hard', so (unlike plants you may have seen in your local garden centre) they stay outside all through the year. This means they might not look their prettiest when they arrive, particularly if you have placed your order in winter - or if it's early and they have not yet started to grow. Alternatively, if you've ordered summer-flowering plants in September, they may well have been cut down to encourage fresh new growth. Basically, we will do what's best for our plants, which means that they will do their best for you. Therefore, please remember, the roots are the most important part of the plant, not the top growth.

This 'tough love' makes the plants very robust, so they can be planted straight out in the garden without any risk of a setback as soon as they arrive - with a couple of exceptions. Never plant when the ground is icy or waterlogged, or during hot dry conditions unless you can water them regularly.

If they can't be planted straight away, place them in a sheltered place away from bright midday sunshine and wind. A shed or garage may sound ideal, but it's far too dark. Keep them well watered and get them in the ground as soon as you can.



Plants won't look their best at certain times of the year



YOU MAY BE REASSURED TO KNOW ALL OUR FULLY HARDY PLANTS ARE BACKED UP BY A 5 YEAR GUARANTEE.



The roots are the most important part - they are like the plant's engine.

94% of our customers would consider buying from Crocus again (Which? Gardening survey 2016)

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LAYING OUT A BORDER...

- It's unrealistic to expect a border to perform for nine months of the year because plants are living things and they generally peak in one season only.
- It's far better to have a border that gives 3 months of pleasure at its peak and then to extend the planting further by adding a few plants that perform either before or after the main flush. A spring-flowering border, for instance, is likely to rely on woodlanders, early-flowering shrubs, spring bulbs and ferns. You can extend the season by incorporating late-summer, shade loving hydrangeas. This area will look largely green in summer, but foliage is just as important as flower. Alternatively, adding some penstemons, cosmos and border phloxes into a border that peaks in early summer will keep that area alive until autumn.
- In order to succeed visually a border has to have larger blocks of plants that flow together and mingle in a natural way.
- Plant in odd numbers - threes, fives, sevens or nines of the same plant, depending on your space and your budget. These will join together and create a pleasing tapestry.
- Placing one plant away from the main group deceives the eye and makes the border look larger than it is.
- Less is more, so try to restrict your plant choices and select a few plants that you love the look of, making sure that they fit into your border's timeline so that they overlap or coincide. If you select too many single specimens you'll create a bitty pincushion that flops visually.
- Lay all your plants out in the border before planting them and arrange them. Give them enough space to develop - remembering that a larger plant will need more space than a smaller plant.
- Don't arrange them strictly to height, or your border will look like guards on parade. If there's a tall airy plant or grass it could go near the front and create a soft, hazy screen.
- Try to weave your plants through the border and there are several ways of doing this. You can

create a ribbon effect by curling a line of plants through the border. Or you can form a triangle that disappears back into the border.

- Mix the textures by adding plants with a vertical presence such as kniphofias, verbascums, veronicastrums and aconitums. These will rise up, connecting the ground to the sky above, breaking up the monotony of lots of mounds (the natural profile of most perennial plants) and creating extra drama and interest. Sword-shaped foliage or upright grasses will have the same effect.
- One large-leaved bold plant or one in a strong colour also helps. *Cotinus coggygia* 'Royal Purple', for instance, will inject a blast of burgundy-red that sets off neutral grasses.



Top Tip

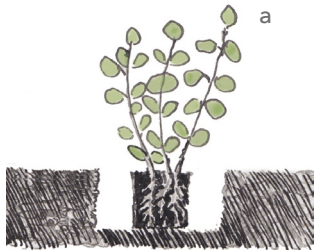
When planting your groups, avoid making round blobby blocks because these will not allow the eye to flow.

GETTING READY TO PLANT....

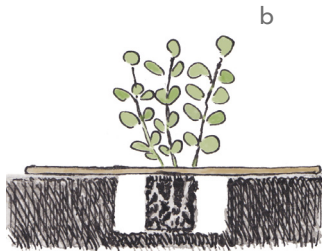
- Preparing the ground well will make the most difference to how your plants will do in the future.
- Make sure your plants are really well watered.
- If you've got good soil that's fertile and deep, all you need do is fork over the area and then plant, although most soils will benefit from having some composted organic matter dug in first.
- If you're not sure what type of soil you have, take a small handful and roll it in your hands. Clay soil makes a ball, not unlike plasticine in texture, while sand is very crumbly. Most soils are somewhere in between.



GENERAL PLANTING TIPS



- Water the plants well and prepare the soil in the border by digging in lots of composted organic matter.
- Dig a hole about twice as wide as the plant's rootball (see diagram a). Do not dig down too deeply though, because the plant will sink as the ground settles.



- Remove the plant from its pot. The best way to do this is to give the sides of the pot a squeeze, then while supporting the plant, tip them up and slip them out. Larger plants can be laid on their side before being gently eased out.
- Most plants need to be planted at the same depth as they were in their pot. When judging the soil level, lay a cane across the hole so that it's lying flat on the surface of the soil either side (see diagram b). Use this as a guide to how high your plant should sit when it's planted.
- When you have the level right, backfill around the sides, gently firming it down (no squishing!) to get rid of any air pockets and make the plant secure.



- Tease out the roots, particularly any that were circling around the bottom or sides of the pot.
- Water thoroughly. Don't dribble the hose on them. It's far better to fill a watering can or bucket with a hose and gently tip the water round the plant (see diagram c). Do this a couple of times a week in the first growing season.
- Backfill the hole a little and then pop the plant in.

PLANTING ON HEAVY SOIL OR CLAY...

- Create a larger planting hole, and then break up the base of the hole with a garden fork so that water can drain away in wet weather.
- Adding coarse grit to the bottom of the planting hole, or mixing some coarse grit into the garden soil for backfilling, will also help drainage.

PLANTING ON VERY LIGHT SOIL...

- Make sure you enrich the soil with organic matter by adding garden compost to the ground and forking it through. This will not only add nutrients, but will help with the soils ability to hold water.
- Light soil is often quite dry so the 'puddling in' technique, which is hundreds of years old, helps all plants settle in well.



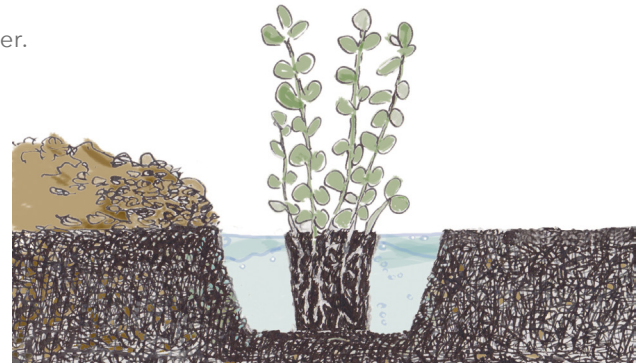
Allium, nepeta and verbascum



Euphorbia characias subsp. *wulfenii*

THE PUDDLING IN TECHNIQUE - PERFECT IN DRY CONDITIONS

- Dig your hole and using a watering can, fill it to the brim with water.
- Place the plant in the hole and backfill with soil immediately.
- As the water drains away, it pulls the soil downwards and gives the plant a damp foundation of moist soil, eliminating air pockets.
- The success of this technique relies on being speedy - don't be tempted to watch the water drain away before you backfill!



PERENNIALS

Perennials can be divided into two groups - early and late-flowering. These are treated differently when it comes to care. The differences are tackled here.

EARLY PERENNIALS

- Early-flowering perennials peak between late-spring and midsummer so they mix well with roses. They tend to be shorter and softer stemmed than late-flowering perennials.
- Most are insect-friendly so planting them alongside double-flowered roses or peonies, which offer nothing to pollinators, will please your hoverflies, bees, butterflies or wasps.
- Deadheading is essential. It will encourage a longer period of flowering and often induce a second, later flush.
- Deadheading also stops brown seed heads from forming. These are perfectly acceptable in a late border, because they reflect this fruitful and mellow season, but brown is a no-no in high summer. Cut it out as soon as you see it. The flower dead header works well when it comes to snipping off spent flowers or the odd browning leaf.
- Early-flowering perennials should generally be cut down in early autumn to encourage regrowth at the base.



Helenium 'Ruby Tuesday'

LATE PERENNIALS

- These tend to be taller and are often stiffer-stemmed than the early perennials so their seed heads can often be left to catch the frost. This adds winter interest too and aids wildlife. Wrens will pick through these plants to catch insects even when the weather's hard. You may wish to remove some that can be too generous with their seeds.
- Many of the plants that flower in autumn are members of the daisy family. The word is a corruption of 'day's eye' so make sure that you give them an open, sunny situation.
- Daisies are extremely good for insects, including butterflies and their late flowers are vital for pollinators and just as important as early flowers are.
- Taller late-season grasses are perfect partners for late-season perennials and they will help add movement. As winter descends they provide a gossamer veil in front of the low sun.
- Cut late-season performers back in late winter, but don't burn or bin the stems. All sorts of insects hibernate in the nooks and crannies and hollow stems. Stack them up in the garden, or put them on the compost heap, and when the time is right those helpful little creatures will creep out into the garden once again.

SOME SPECIFICS...



Iris 'Dutch Chocolate'

Herbaceous peonies

The tuberous roots of peonies should lie between one and two inches below the soil surface because cool temperatures induce the flower buds to develop. Bury them deeper and your peonies won't produce much flower.

Bearded iris

The rhizomes of bearded irises need to sit at soil level, rather like hippos in a pond. They also need their own space to flower well and ideally the rhizome should catch as much sunshine as possible.

Alstroemerias

As an alstroemeria matures it pushes itself deeper into the soil. This process takes a year or two, so mulch newly planted alstroemerias in autumn, with a thick layer of bark or strulch etc.

Oriental poppies

These are summer dormant, so after flowering perennial poppies retreat underground and leave a gap which can be filled with later flowering annuals such as cosmos or nicotiana. On the plus side, oriental poppies have good foliage over winter.

Penstemons, hardy salvias and fuchsias

Most penstemons flower late, because these South American plants love evenly balanced days and nights. Hardy South American salvias and hardy fuchsias have the same tendency, but this makes all three superb late performers. However they are too tender to survive being cut back in autumn, so leave them to overwinter and then cut them back to the new buds in late spring.

Echinacea

Many named echinaceas benefit from being cut back straight after flowering to encourage fresh basal growth. They enjoy fertile soil that does not dry out and they also resent competition - so give them plenty of space. They're very hardy, but dislike winter wet, and they have a short-lived tendency. Once planted do not divide or move them about. *E. purpurea* can be raised from seed easily.

Euphorbias

Once evergreen euphorbias have finished flowering remove the flowering stems at the base to encourage fresh growth.

Geums

Most geums need regular division every third year or so, to remain vigorous. This can be done straight after flowering. 'Totally Tangerine', a sterile long-flowering geum, can stay undivided for many years though.

Astrantias

These flower profusely in late spring and early summer and then re-bloom in September, a little. Some are sterile and don't set seeds, but others can be a nuisance. They're all best dead-headed after flowering because the early flowers tend to brown very unattractively in hot summer sun.

Hellebores

Hybrid hellebores should be deadheaded after flowering, in early May usually, because the seedlings will almost certainly be inferior to the parent plant in the majority of cases. Allowing a prized hellebore to produce lots of seedlings will also weaken your mother plant. Cut off all the foliage in early December, to deter hellebore black spot, and when the buds open they'll be framed by new leaves.

Phlox

Find these a spot in moist soil and cut the stems back in early autumn to promote new growth at the base.

AFTERCARE

THE CHELSEA CHOP

It's possible to 'Chelsea chop' many perennials in the second half of May (around the same time as the Chelsea Flower Show). This is done to delay their flowering time, or encourage them to flower over a longer period. Chopping can also affect the height of the plant, and their shorter stature will make the taller perennials less likely to flop.

There are several ways to go about it. The most straightforward one is to cut all the stems back by a third to a half, but a more sympathetic approach is either to cut back one in three stems on each plant - or cut back the stems towards the back of the plant. The remaining stems will flower at their normal time, but the ones that have been cut back will form side shoots that will go on to produce lots more flowers later in the year.

Achillea, aster, campanula, coreopsis, echinacea, eupatorium, gaura, lobelia, macleaya, monarda, perovskia, rudbeckia, sedum (upright, strong-growing forms such as 'Herbstfreude'), teucrium, tradescantia, verbena, veronica and veronicastrum make good candidates.

Border phloxes and heleniums also respond well and you can treat these in another way by cutting back the front third of the plant so that the front part of the clump flowers later on covering spent flowers.

Although not a true perennial, hardy lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) can also be cut back by a third to a half in mid-May so that it flowers in late July.

A COMPLETE CHOP IN JULY (A HAMPTON HAIRCUT)

Hardy geraniums respond very well from being cut right back to nothing in July, because they produce new foliage within ten days or so. Repeat-flowering geraniums will flower again in late summer.

Grey-leaved mound-forming nepetas, or catmints, also respond well to having all the foliage cut away to nothing in midsummer.

Scabious and lupins resent a hard chop however.

Cut back in mid-May...



...for flowers in July



Top Tip

If you have potfulls of agapanthus lay them flat on their sides in a sheltered position so that winter rains can't saturate the roots. This also works with lilies. More plants die from being too wet, than from being too cold.

GRASSES

Ornamental grasses can make a huge difference to a border. They can be woven though to unite a planting scheme, rather like dry ice on a stage, or they can offer airy movement and texture. They vary in their needs, their flowering times and in height and shape.

They can often look unattractive in a pot though, and taller grasses may have had to be cut back on the nursery so that they can be packed. Once planted they soon recover and most are long-lived.

Grasses fall into two different groups,
warm and cool-season.

WARM-SEASON GRASSES

Most warm-season grasses perform in late summer and autumn, but as many are growing at the edge of their range, this makes a difference to flowering times. So, a warm-season grass that flowers in July in the south-east may flower four to six weeks later in a colder district. Most have good winter foliage and this is appreciated by small insects and by hedgehogs who often hibernate in grassy tussocks.

PAMPAS

This grass makes a large clump, so one strategically placed will shine and make a statement in any garden. South American in origin, it flowers late and the plumes make winter spectacular. There is no need to set fire to the clumps as some say. Tidy them in March, by shearing them lightly, and new foliage will appear. Wear thick gloves, because the foliage has sharp edges.

PANICUM

The flowering heads resemble tiny beads so they should be planted in drifts to create texture in the late border. Some are coloured pink and sometimes the foliage is grey and many will colour up in autumn. These North American grasses thrive on cold winters and warm summers in their native land so find them a spot where the soil warms up as quickly as possible in spring. However they are not plants for a dry hot spot because they like fertile soil that stays moist during the summer.

MISCANTHUS

This is one of the most useful late-season grasses of all because most are tall, hardy and combine airy grass heads with good foliage. They enjoy fertile soil and summer moisture so they make extremely good partners for asters, tall phloxes and daisies. Position them between you and the sunset so that low late sunshine backlights them during the winter.

PENNISETUM

These have slender heads that are often soft and fluffy, although not always. They also have handsome foliage that curtsies so they make great front of the border plants. Pennisetums enjoy summer warmth and good drainage in winter. When planting add grit to the base of the hole.



Hakonechloa macra

COOL-SEASON GRASSES

These get going earlier in spring and produce their flowering heads before the warm-season grasses. Generally most are not so reliant on good drainage and many actually prefer moist soil.

STIPA

A very variable group but they all need good drainage, so add grit to the base of the hole. The early-summer showstopper (*Stipa gigantea*) has golden oat-like flower heads on splayed out slender stems, creates an airy veil and can be used with alliums, roses and all early summer flowers. *Stipa tenuissima*, or ponytail grass, is constantly moving and swaying and is best woven through a border.

DESCHAMPSIA

A useful deciduous grass for moist soil and one that tolerates some shade. The veil of fine airy panicles is often used in prairie planting because the young foliage is very green and, as the summer wears on, the heads take on a golden glow.

FESCUE

Most festucas enjoy good drainage and bright light, especially those with blue-grey foliage such as *Festuca glauca*. Add grit to the base of the hole to improve drainage.

CAREX

These are sedges and many prefer normal to damp soil, so position them carefully or add organic matter when planting. Do not cut back in autumn or winter, tidy only if needed in spring. *Carex testacea* with its fine almost wiry leaves is one of the best for winter presence while *Carex oshimensis*, another evergreen will spread across the ground like a multi-legged star fish.

HAKONECHLOA MACRA

This dies back in winter, but by April this easy grass has usually produced new foliage that billows over edges. Plant it in damper corners or along border edges.

CALAMAGROSTIS

These do best in good soil, rather than dry soil, but they will thrive in any garden soil. *Calamagrostis brachytricha* is happy in clay soil.



Stipa gigantea

SHRUBS

Shrubs provide structure and shape within a border or a focal point in a lawn. Many will also offer flower, berries, scent or autumn colour.

PLANTING SHRUBS

- If planting in spring or summer, you'll have to water your plant really well in its first growing season. Those planted in autumn generally cope without as much watering, because the soil is still warm enough to encourage roots. Winter rains will keep those new roots moist.
- Prepare the soil well in advance, by thoroughly digging the area right round where the shrub will be planted.
- Dig your hole and incorporate organic matter, such as garden compost, into your spoil heap because this makes the soil richer and aids drainage. Don't put organic matter into the base of the hole though as it will rot away and your shrub may sink.
- Gently rough up the roots around the edge of the rootball.
- Make sure your shrub is facing the right way - every plant has a front and back.
- Although evergreens look more rugged because they keep foliage throughout the year, they can be harder to establish as they don't have a dormant period when they're resting. They respond best to being planted in spring, summer and autumn rather than in winter.



Daphne 'Sweet Amethyst'



ROSES

The nation's favourite and often incredibly long-flowering, roses are a large and diverse group. A staple of the summer border, there are some that can also be draped over walls and fences or potted up on the patio.

PLANTING ROSES

- All our roses are field grown and lifted when dormant and then potted up in autumn.
- Potted up roses can be planted throughout the year, except in freezing conditions and during a drought. However great care must be taken when removing roses from their pot, because there could be a lot of loose compost that hasn't been penetrated by the roots.
- Water your rose and, if you can't plant immediately, place it somewhere sheltered in good light and keep it well watered.
- To avoid rose replant disease, do not plant a new rose in the same ground where another rose has recently been growing (see top tip).
- Prepare the soil by digging in lots of well-rotted compost or manure.
- Carefully judge if the planting depth is correct. The graft union should be just below the soil surface.
- Keep an eye on roses that are planted in spring and summer because they will flag in dry conditions. Carefully tip a bucket of water over the rose in dry weather.



Top Tip

Help avoid rose replant disease by removing the base of a stout cardboard box, and sink this into the planting hole. Using soil from a different part of the garden plant the rose in the box and by the time the cardboard disintegrates the rose should be established. Mycorrhizal fungi (rose rootgrow) is also said to help.

CLIMBERS

PLANTING CLIMBERS AND WALL SHRUBS

These are an important part of the garden because, although they take up little ground space, they will cover fences, climb through trees or loll over low walls.



Clematis 'Jackmanii Superba'

- Never plant anything right up against a wall. Leave a gap of at least 60cm (2ft) if possible, so that the roots can still benefit from any rainfall. The climber or shrub can still be trained towards the wall.
- Make sure you have adequate support in place. This could be a series of wires on a wall, some trellis, or a freestanding obelisk, arch or pergola.
- Always prepare the soil well, by making a wide hole, and once planted take off any plastic ties and remove the canes.
- Once planted, tie the tendrils onto the support to help get it going.

THE QUEEN OF THE CLIMBERS - CLEMATIS

It's possible, almost, to have a clematis in flower in every month of the year so most gardens contain several.

- Dig a hole at least twice the width of the pot and half as deep again.
- Add some well-rotted organic matter (compost, leaf mould, decayed manure etc) to the very base of the planting hole.
- When positioning, ensure that the surface of the root ball is at least 7.5cm (3") below the level of the surrounding soil.
- Backfill with a mixture of equal parts soil and loam-based potting compost.
- Place some more of the organic matter used in the bottom of the hole around the base of the plant - but keeping it away from the stem itself.
- Then untie the clematis from its cane and retrain onto its permanent support.

CLEMATIS PRUNING IN A NUTSHELL

Many clematis will come with a large label listing the pruning group and when to prune it. Remove it and store it for reference.

- Group 1:** this includes the winter and spring flowering clematis, which do not require any formal pruning.
- Group 2:** these large-flowered, early-summer clematis should be lightly tidied in February and straight after flowering.
- Group 3:** the clematis varieties that flower between July and September. These are cut back hard in February.

Top Tip

Avoid planting clematis that belong to different pruning groups next to one another or they will be difficult to prune.

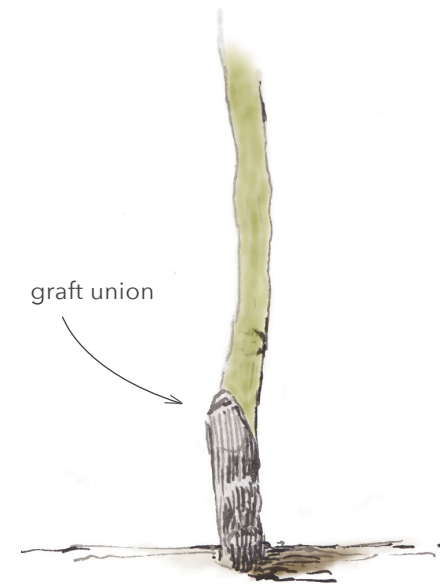


TREES

Trees are a garden essential because they provide scale and perspective to every other plant. They also offer shelter and are a haven for wildlife.

PLANTING TREES

- Prepare the area around where your new tree is being planted by digging it over.
- Dig your planting hole and mix in some organic matter (garden compost, leafmould etc), into your spoil heap. Don't put organic matter into the base of the hole though as it will rot away and your tree may sink.
- If planting in a windy spot, invest in a tree stake and some sturdy ties.
- If the trees roots have started to circle the pot, trim them off with sharp secateurs. Magnolias roots however, should not be clipped.
- Swivel your tree around, so the best side is facing outwards.
- Keep the area round the tree (ideally 1m or so) clear of weeds.
- Water your tree really well in its first growing season, particularly if planting during the warmer weather.



Top Tip

Make sure that your soil levels are correct as many trees are grafted, and this graft, often the bumpy part of the trunk, must be above ground level.

FRUIT

These are going to be in your garden for many years, so once you've chosen your varieties take time and trouble over the planting.

A warm position is vital for all fruit, as this will ensure that the blossom opens and produces nectar.

The nectar will attract pollinators who will carry pollen from one variety to the next, because most fruit needs cross pollinating.





blueberry 'Bluecrop'

PLANTING A FRUIT TREE OR BUSH

- Prepare the soil well by digging in lots of organic matter.
- Remove the tree or bush from its pot and check that the roots are not going round in circles. If they are, then just cut through them with some sharp secateurs and this will encourage fresh new root growth.
- Check the soil level carefully when planting fruit trees because they are usually grafted and the graft point must be above the ground.
- Mulch around the base of fruit trees after planting and make sure grass and similar vegetation is kept well away from the bottom of the stem. Partially rotted grass clippings work well.
- Water well in the first growing season.
- Feed in mid-spring with a top dressing of general-purpose fertiliser.

HEDGING

Hedges are a long term investment and will be densely planted, so good soil preparation is crucial.



PLANTING BARE-ROOT HEDGING

- Bare-root whips can only be planted when they're dormant - usually between late autumn and early spring.
- Prepare your strip of ground in the autumn. Cover it in old carpet, or cardboard to keep the frost out.
- To get a straight line use some string suspended between two short pieces of wood.
- Decide whether you're going to plant in a single or double line. If you're opting for a double row, alternate your plants so one is in the gap between the other row.
- The usual spacing is 45cm (18") and it's useful to cut a cane to that length to mark the distance.
- Make a hole and drop the whip in. You should be able to see the old soil mark on the stem to gauge the correct depth. Firm it into the ground.
- Mulch to prevent weed seedlings, with bark chippings or similar.

PLANTING POT-GROWN HEDGING

- This can be planted throughout the year, except in extreme cold or in droughts.
- Prepare the ground well and space out the plants on the ground. Plant at the same depth as the soil in the pot.
- Mulch and keep watered.

BULBS

The general rule of thumb is the depth of planting should be twice as deep as the bulb, or a little more.



Bulbs for pots - blues & pinks

PLANTING IN THE AUTUMN

- Most spring flowering bulbs can be planted from September, so narcissus, scilla, alliums, crocus, chionodoxas, fritillarias, shorter reticulate irises and snowdrops all go into the ground then.
- Tulips are the exception. They are susceptible to tulip fire blight, a fungal disease that can cause grey lesions on the leaf and petals. This is far less likely to happen once the temperatures drop, so tulip bulbs are generally planted in November and December.

PLANTING IN THE SPRING

- Summer-flowering bulbs are planted in the spring.
- Generally most summer-flowering bulbs need good drainage and a warm position.
- This group includes gladioli, freesias, eucomis, lilies and crocosmias. Plant them at three times the depth of the bulb because many are best when a little deeper.



Dahlia 'Rip City'

DAHLIAS

- Start your dahlia tubers off in early March under glass in a warm position. Plant them in large pots of loam-based John Innes no. 2. Keep the compost moist rather than wet.
- They must be kept warm as the slightest hint of frost will check their growth and blacken their foliage.
- Do not plant outside until after the last frost. Harden them off for at least a week before planting, by placing them somewhere sheltered outside. This toughens the foliage, deterring slugs.
- Taller types will need staking as you plant.
- Water well in the first half of summer so that your plants establish themselves. Feed with a potash-rich plant food, either home-made comfrey tea or liquid tomato feed, once buds appear.
- Once flowering, deadhead every few days. The pointed seed heads (which feel soggy to the touch) can look very similar to the bun-shaped buds when you're a novice. So get your eye in before you start.
- It's wise to lift your tubers and store them once they become frosted. Store in a cool, frost-free place in dry garden soil or compost, then you can repeat the process again.



GROWING PLANTS IN POTS

- Many plants will do well in pots, but as their roots can't reach out into the surrounding soil to take up water and nutrients, they will need some extra care. Keep in mind too that plants grown in pots will never get as big as they would if planted in the ground. This can be a good thing in a smaller garden.
- Acid-loving plants, such as most Japanese maples, azaleas and rhododendrons, only grow well on soils with a low pH. They will need to be containerised in ericaceous compost if your soil has an alkaline or neutral pH.
- Most plants will be happiest in a loam-based potting compost, which tends to hold the water better than peat-based composts. When peat-based compost dries out, it is really hard to re-wet. If this happens, add a few drops (no more!) of washing up liquid to a watering can full of water and slowly water it on. Make sure it doesn't just run off the sides. Alternatively place the pot in a deep tray-full and let it gradually soak it up.
- A stable broad-based container with straight sides is less likely to topple over in an exposed position.
- Standing a pot on pot feet will help create better drainage.
- Partly fill the pot with compost and place the plant in the pot. Check that the level of the soil in the pot is two inches below the level of the container. Leaving this space at the top aids drainage and also helps when watering in dry periods.
- Fill in around the sides with more compost, gently firming it down.
- Water well. Aim for the soil to be moist but not waterlogged.
- Feed twice a year in June and September, using a slow release fertiliser such as Vitax Q4, or blood, fish and bone.



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