

## FALL FOCUS ON BULBS

Few gardeners would consider their landscape complete without the addition of spring flowering bulbs. After a long winter, their colourful presence is a much deserved treat in the early spring. Your selection of bulbs is best displayed in a carpet of lush groundcover(s) or with emerging green perennial foliage. This perennial greenery will hide the spent leaves of the bulbs after the flowering takes place.

Spring bulbs can be divided into two main sizes: small and standard. The standards are the tulips, hyacinths and daffodils while the small less common bulbs include crocus scillas, grape hyacinth, snowdrops, and dwarf iris.

My recommendation is to plant bulbs three times their depth in the soil. If your soil contains heavy clay, dig sharp sand into certain areas where you want to cluster your bulbs. Clustering is key because bulbs look best when crowded together in groupings. Save your back, dig to the recommended depth and concentrate on small sections of the garden.

These small designated areas that you decide to use can have bulbs on multiple layers. The small bulbs can be massed in a layer on top of the larger bulbs. This effect is called layering.

Are squirrels eating your bulbs every year? One remedy is to cover the areas with leaves. You can also plant crown imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*) bulbs in autumn. The aroma of this fist sized bulb keeps squirrels away and the spring flower is absolutely gorgeous.

Planting spring bulbs in the fall means that you will have something to look forward to in the spring. Bulbs provide that much awaited

first sign of spring, providing a necessary lift for our winter weary spirits.

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