



FLOWERS

Spring-Planted Bulbs, Corms and Roots

no. 7.411

by J.E. Ells and J.R. Feucht ¹

Quick Facts...

Some of the most beautiful garden flowers are produced from spring-planted bulbs, corms and roots, including amaryllis, cannas, callas, dahlias, gladiolus, lilies and tuberous begonias.

In locating a flower bed for spring-planted bulbs, consider exposure, soil type, color and height of flowers, and time of flowering.

Dig bulbs, corms or roots in the fall and place in frost-free storage for the winter.

These plants represent a relatively large investment; culture them with care.

Site Selection

In locating a flower bed for spring-planted bulbs, consider exposure, soil type, color and height of flowers, and time of flowering. Deciduous trees produce little shade in early spring. By mid-June, they may produce a shade too dense for the growth of any but the most shade-tolerant plants. Soil type cannot be changed readily, but it can be modified with fertilizer and organic materials.

Color and height should be known so that flowers will show to their best advantage in the setting and tall flowers will not screen shorter ones. Knowing the time of flowering helps in locating these flowers so they bloom in sequence with other plants around them.

Purchasing Bulbs, Corms and Roots

A better selection of bulbs, corms and roots is available early in the spring. Purchasing packaged material makes shopping more convenient and the buyer is reasonably sure that the flowers will be true to their labels. The package, however, should allow the buyer to see the bulbs.

Purchasing roots, bulbs and corms from bins allows the buyer to examine and select on an individual basis. However, with many buyers handling this material, there is a chance for mix-ups. Select only the largest and firmest specimens from bins.

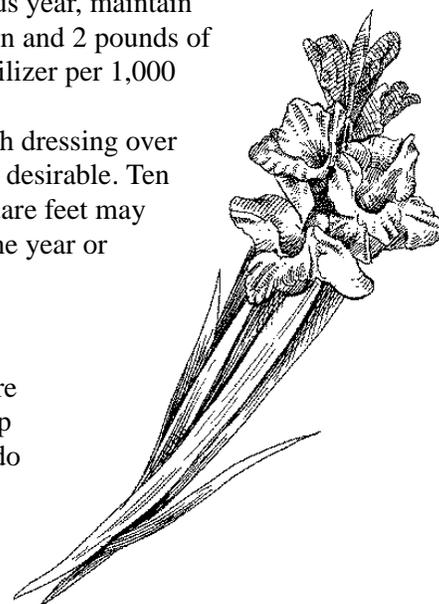
Soil Preparation

If the soil produced well the previous year, maintain productivity by applying 1 pound of nitrogen and 2 pounds of phosphoric acid or 20 pounds of 5-10-5 fertilizer per 1,000 square feet.

Where compost is available, a 1-inch dressing over the ground prior to spading or roto-tilling is desirable. Ten bushels of well-rotted manure per 1,000 square feet may be applied, but compost fresh manure for one year or more before applying it to the flower bed.

Culture

Amaryllis blossoms range from pure white through various shades of pink to deep red. They are intolerant of frost and do not do well in cool soil. Because of this, it is customary to pot the bulbs and grow them inside at a constant 65 degrees F. Move the pot outside in June and take it



Spring-planted bulbs, corms and roots include:

- *amaryllis*,
- *caladium*,
- *callas*,
- *cannas*,
- *dahlias*,
- *gladiolus*,
- *lilies*, and
- *tuberous begonias*.

inside in the fall. Store in a dry condition until spring, when it is again started indoors.

Caladiums (*Caladia*) are grown for their showy foliage, ranging from white to red, with many beautiful leaf patterns in the tradition of coleus. They do best in shaded or semishaded areas well supplied with humus and moisture. After frost, dig the bulbs and store in a cool place to replant in the spring.

Callas are available in colors ranging from white to yellow to pink. The flowers consist of a center spike (spathe) with a single petal (spadix) cut low on one side, a characteristic of the species. They produce from roots planted in the spring and should be handled similarly to tuberous begonias.

Cannas range from ivory and yellow through rose and salmon to crimson and scarlet. The foliage is either green or bronze. Plant the roots 6 inches deep and 18 inches apart in late spring. After frost kills the foliage, dig and store the roots over winter much the same as dahlias.

Dahlias come in nearly every color except blue. The typical dahlia reaches a height of 6 feet and requires support, usually provided by a stake driven 12 inches into the ground and 6 inches behind the root at the time of planting. Dahlias do not tolerate frost and should not be planted if there is a chance that the shoots will freeze.

The size of individual flowers may be increased by removing the buds from the lateral branches. However, this practice decreases the overall showiness of the planting. After the stalks are killed by frost, remove them, leaving a 6-inch stub. Leave the roots in the ground for two weeks to thoroughly ripen before digging them. Dig carefully so the roots do not break away from the clump, which results in blind roots. (A blind root has no eye and therefore cannot produce a shoot.) Dry the roots enough to shake the soil from them, then pack in sawdust, perlite or vermiculite, and store in a cool, dry place until spring.

Gladiolus is available in nearly every color. Plant the corms 3 inches deep and 6 inches apart in the spring after danger of freezing the shoots has passed. During the growing season, the original corm withers and a new one forms on top of it. The cutting of flowers does not inhibit the development of the new corm as long as leaves are not removed with the flower.

On the other hand, seed is produced at the expense of corm production. As soon as the tops die down, dig the corms. Remove the withered corms and tops and store the new corms in a frost-free location over winter. Avoid high temperatures and low humidity.

Lilies are available in several types and in colors ranging from white and yellow to deep red. While lilies are perennial, not all of them endure Colorado winters. If unsure of the hardiness of a particular lily, dig a portion of the plants, pack the bulbs (roots or rhizomes) in sawdust, vermiculite or perlite, and store in a frost-free location during the winter. They may be replanted in the spring. The plants remaining in the garden should be mulched to help them through the winter. The general rule is to plant the bulb (storage organ) to a depth of three times its height.

Tuberous begonias come in colors from white through yellow and orange to deep red. Their flowers are primarily double. Plant the roots, which may be 1 1/2 inches in diameter, 4 inches deep in a semishaded area. They do best in soil with high organic matter content that is kept relatively moist. After frost, dig the root, pack in sawdust, and store under cool but frost-free conditions for replanting in the spring.



¹J.E. Ells, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension vegetable crop specialist and associate professor; and J.R. Feucht, Cooperative Extension landscape plants specialist and professor; horticulture and landscape architecture (both retired).

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