

spring bulb gardens



Tulips, hyacinths, dwarf *Iris*es and *Crocus*es
Photo: iBulb

BOTANICAL NAME AND COMMON NAMES

- *Crocus* (KROW-kus)
- *Hyacinthus* (hy-uh-SIN-thus)
Hyacinth
- *Iris* (EYE-ris)
Dwarf Iris, Fleur-de-lis
- *Lilium* (LIL-ee-um)
Lily
- *Muscari* (mus-CAR-ee)
Grape hyacinth
- *Narcissus* (nar-SIS-us)
Daffodil, Jonquil, Paper-white
- *Tulipa* (TOO-li-puh)
Tulip

DESCRIPTION

Mixed spring bulb gardens commonly comprise three or more of the following flower types: tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, grape hyacinths, *Crocus*es, dwarf *Iris*es and/or hybrid lilies. More exotic versions can also include *Alliums*, *Fritillarias*, *Ornithogalums*, *Freesias* and other bulbs. Assortments vary from grower to grower, and they can range from monochromatic to polychromatic (multicolored). Containers run the gamut from basic to decorative — plastic and clay flower pots and saucers, baskets, ceramic planters, glass bowls and cylinders, metalware, and more. Sizes generally range from 4 to 12 inches in diameter or width and, sometimes, larger.

DECORATIVE LIFE

Individual bulb flower blooms typically last from three to six days each, but because there are multiple bulbs and a variety of bulbs in mixed potted gardens, which usually bloom at slightly different times, the life span of a bulb garden can be as long as two weeks, from the time the first bulb blooms until the last flower fades.

Of course, longevity is dependent on the care they receive and the environmental conditions in which they're displayed, their maturity at the time of sale, and even flower variety.

AVAILABILITY

Potted spring bulb gardens are typically available from January through April or early May (Mother's Day), depending on the grower.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT These plants prefer indirect or diffused sunlight; however, they are fairly robust and will perform satisfactorily in less-than-perfect conditions.

WATER Flowering bulbs require moderately moist potting medium at all times. Water these flowers whenever the soil surface is dry to the touch. Good drainage is also critical; never allow potted bulbs to stand in water.

TEMPERATURE Generally, potted bulbs prefer cool environments, 60 F to 65 F during the day — definitely no higher than 70 — and 55 F to 60 F at night. These flowers will develop and age more quickly in warm environments. Make adjustments in your department to accommodate the preferences of these plants, and inform each customer of their temperature requirements.

REFRIGERATION Under extreme circumstances, if spring-blooming bulbs are developing too quickly in your department, you can store them in a floral cooler at temperatures no lower than

40° F and for no longer than three days. Improper refrigerated storage can cause cosmetic damage to foliage and blooms, and performance at the consumer level can be adversely affected.

GROOMING As blooms fade, cut off flower stems and foliage close to the bulbs.

REBLOOMING Most forced bulbs will not rebloom indoors, if at all. However, if customers want to try to get them to rebloom outdoors, advise them to follow these five steps.

- As blooms fade, cut off the flower heads, leaving the stems and foliage.
- Continue watering the bulbs until the foliage has completely withered.
- Remove the bulbs from the container, and cut off the dried foliage and flower stems close to the bulbs.
- Store the bulbs in a dark, cool, dry environment until autumn.
- Plant the bulbs outdoors in the fall.

purchasing advice

For maximum flower life at the consumer level, buy spring bulb gardens at an early stage of development — when the buds are just visible but before they show color and begin to open.

With bulb flowers in bud form, these flowering planters often lack sales appeal, so inform customers that bulb flowers typically open quickly, that those in bud stage will provide them with more days of enjoyment and that they will be able to watch the flowers grow and mature. **sf**



Hyacinths, tulips, polyanthus daffodils and *Crocus*es, Photo: iBulb



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