

Tips for Forcing Bulbs



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- Pot bulbs in free draining, light, airy soil (1/3 soil, 1/3 peat, 1/3 sand or perlite)
- Plant bulbs with their tips just protruding from the soil surface; disregard outdoor planting depth.
- Pot up bulbs in October for January blooms, mid-October for February flowering, mid-November for March and April blooms.
- Store potted bulbs in a cool place (50°F) for 4 weeks, and then provide temperatures between 35° and 43° for 8 weeks (11 weeks for tulips).
 - Bury the pots in a shady garden bed, and cover with 3-4 inches of soil plus an additional 6 inches of mulch.
 - Place the pots in a cold frame and bury in a generous amount of perlite.
 - An unheated garage or basement will serve as long as there is darkness and the temperatures listed above.
 - A refrigerator is ideal, but do not store with ripe fruit, as ethylene gas will ruin the bulbs.
- At the end of the cold period, place the pots in a cool (55°-65°) sunny window until flower buds appear. Hyacinth can tolerate up to 73°, but crocus should remain below 60° for longest blooming.
- Move budded plants to indirect light and maintain cool temperatures.
- **Note:** Amaryllis and Tazetta Narcissus (including Paperwhites) do not need a cold period before forcing. Pot them and place in a bright, cool locations.

Easiest bulbs to force	Amaryllis, Crocus, Eranthis, Hyacinth, Iris reticulata, Muscari, Narcissus, and Tulip.
Other excellent bulbs for containers	Anemone, Cyclamen, Chionodoxa, Colchicum, Erythronium, Frittilaria, Galanthus, Leucojum, Scilla, Sternbergia.

Hyacinth and crocus may be forced in special vases that suspend the bulb above water. A piece of natural charcoal in the water helps keep it fresh. Keep in cool darkness until crocus shoots are 2 inches long, hyacinth shoots 4 inches long. Then move to a cool, bright location. Bulbs grown in water instead of soil will not repeat bloom and should be considered 'disposable'.