



Forcing Bulbs Indoors

Enjoy blooms all winter long! Forcing bulbs means tricking spring-flowering bulbs into blooming early indoors. Mimicking winter conditions by providing a consistent cold period for bulbs potted in soil means with the right steps, you can enjoy the beauty of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, and crocuses—even in the middle of winter!



Best Bulbs for Forcing

The easiest choices: Paperwhite bulbs & Amaryllis bulbs. These bulbs are sold ready to be potted into soil and remain indoors without any cold period. They will take 6-10 weeks to bloom.

The moderately easy choice: Prepared Hyacinth bulbs. The difference between a “prepared” hyacinth bulb and a regular hyacinth bulb is that while both require a cooling period, a “prepared” bulb has been pre-chilled and typically only requires 10-12 weeks at low temperatures. An “unprepared” or regular hyacinth has not been pre-chilled and will require a full cold period of 12-14 weeks.

The more difficult but worth doing choices: Tulips, Daffodils, Crocus, Grape Hyacinths (Muscari), and Hyacinths. these bulbs all require a cold period, stored in cold conditions for 12-14 weeks in order to bloom.

Growing Instructions for Bulbs Requiring a Cold Period

Step 1: Choose & Pot Bulbs

- Use a well-draining pot with holes.
- Plant bulbs close together, tips just above the soil surface.
- Water thoroughly after planting.

Step 2: Chill Period (Mimic Winter)

- Most bulbs need 12-14 weeks of cold at consistent temperature of 2-8°C.
- Place pots in an unheated garage, cold cellar, or refrigerator.
- Keep soil lightly moist (not soggy). Since soil stays moist in cooler temperatures, keep watering at a minimum.
- Label pots with date planted and “bring indoors” date.

Step 3: Bring Indoors & Bloom

- At the specified date, move pots to a warm, bright location.
- Water as needed.
- Blooms will appear in 2-4 weeks, depending on bulb type.

Aftercare

- Forced bulbs use up stored energy and will not re-bloom indoors.
- You can compost the spent bulbs or plant them in the garden in the spring and let the foliage die back naturally.
- Do not cut back the foliage. As the foliage dies back, strength is absorbed back into the bulb, and it may recover enough to bloom again in a couple of years.

Growing Tip!

Start chilling bulbs in October or November for January–March blooms. Stagger pots every 2 weeks for continuous winter colour!