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Hints on Growing Tulips – Care of House and Garden Plants

Michigan State University

Cooperative Extension Service

Home and Family Series

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December 1966

2 pages

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Care of House and Garden Plants

Hints on Growing TULIPS

Cooperative Extension Service Michigan State University



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The tulip is a spring flowering bulb which can be obtained with a variety of shapes and colors. If proper thought is given to the flowering times of the different species and classes, one can have tulips in flower over a period of six to eight weeks.

Soil

Plant in well drained soil; for clay soil, add peat or leaf mold or sand; for sandy soil, add peat. Work the soil thoroughly to a depth of 8 to 12 inches before planting bulbs.

Fertilizer

Apply 5-10-5 at rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet before mixing soil. In spring apply 2 pounds per 100 square feet when growth first appears.

Planting

Plant bulbs from late September to early December, depending on location, temperature, weather conditions. Make sure cool weather has set in before planting so that bulbs don't start to grow in fall.

Firm the soil around bulb. Place base of bulb approximately 6 inches from soil surface; deeper in sandy soils 8 inches to 12 inches. Plant about 4 to 6 inches apart. Water is not necessary if soil is moist.

After the frost has penetrated 1 to 2 inches, cover with a mulch. Remove the coarse portion of the mulch in spring before growth appears above the soil.

Bulb may be planted in shady or sunny place. It is best to plant bulbs away from house so that the heat from the basement does not make bulbs start to grow earlier than normal.

Bulb Care

Do not remove the leaves until they have yellowed. If room is needed for other plants once flowers have bloomed, plant the other flowers in among the stems of the tulips to provide color for the rest of the season.

Bulbs may be left in the garden for longer than one year if planted deep enough and are properly cared for. They should be dug when the quality of the blooms become inferior.

Color Hints

For color effect, plant groups of single colors, 9 to 25 bulbs together.

Common Classes of Tulips

EARLY:

Duc van Tol — Very early flowering single tulips; plant seldom exceeding six inches in height.

Single Early; 10-16 inches, hardy.

Double Early; Longer lasting than singles.

MID-SEASON

Mendel — Chiefly the result of crosses between *Duc van Tol* and *Darwin* tulips.

Single; plants sometimes exceeding twenty inches in height.

Triumph — Chiefly the result of crosses between *Single Early* and *Late* (May-flowering) Tulips; plants generally in stouter build than *Mendel* Tulips and sometimes exceeding twenty inches in height.

LATE OF MAY-FLOWERING

Darwin; Long stem, globular flowers.

Single; tall; lower part of flower usually rectangular in outline.

Darwin hybrid

Single; result of crossing *Darwin* Tulips with *Tulipa Fosteriana* and its varieties.

Breeder (and *Old English Breeder*)

Single; flowers oval or cup-shaped; colors yellowish, orange, brown, red purple or violet; base white or yellow, sometimes stained blue, green or black.

Lily-flowered — *Single*; flowers with pointed reflexed petals.

Cottage (Single late) — Tulips which do not belong to preceding four.

Rembrandt — Broken Darwin Tulips.

Bizarre — Broken Breeder and Cottage Tulips. Single; striped or marked brown, bronze, "black" or purple on yellow ground.

Bojbloemen — Broken Breeder and Cottage Tulips, Single; striped or marked rose pink, violet or purple on white ground.

Parrot — Tulips with lacinate petals.

Double Late (Peony-flowered)

SPECIES

Vary considerably in form and color — flowers in late April.

Diseases

(Fire) *Botrytis Blight* — start as minute yellowish-white spots surrounded by water soaked areas on the leaves, stems, and flowers. Later they enlarge, turn brown and give a blighted appearance to plant.

Control — Spray with Captan 50% WP or Zineb 75% WP, 1½ T. per gal. Also for control burn all plants showing symptoms. Do not replant tulips in the same soil for at least 3 years.

Tulip Break — virus disease. Streaking of flower buds and yellow streaking of foliage.

Control — destroy all affected plants. Aphids transmit the virus control with insecticides.

Pests

Tulip Bulb Aphid — These grey to yellow-white insects 1/10 inch long build up on bulbs in storage (particularly those with cracked scales). Aphids feed by sucking out the juices from the bulbs and occasionally from leaves. Infested bulbs may be killed or the plants may be stunted and distorted.

Control — Apply 2% Lindane dust to bulbs before storing them.

Tulip Leaf Aphid — Clusters of green insects 1/16 inch long occur on shoots and leaves. Winter is passed on bulbs and after planting they move to the foliage. Their feeding may kill leaves and prevent flowers from opening.

Control — Apply 2% Lindane dust to bulbs before storing them or spray infested foliage with either:

	100 Gal. of Water	1 Gal. of Water
20% Lindane emulsion, or	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.
57% Malathion emulsion	1½ pts.	1½ tsp.

Further References

The Complete Book of Bulbs, F. F. Rockwell and Esther C. Grayson. The American Garden Guild and Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, N. Y.

Spring Flowering Bulbs, U.S.D.A. Leaflet 439.

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. N. P. Ralston, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

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