

## CARING FOR FALL BULBS

### PLANT IN FALL...ENJOY IN THE SPRING

Most bulbs planted in the fall are spring blooming. Some of the most common and popular are tulips, daffodils, hyacinth, crocus, and iris.

#### **Preparing the Soil**

Most bulbs adapt to many types of soil but all prefer a loose, porous soil structure. Unless heavy clay soils are amended, bulbs do not thrive for more than one year. The following soil amendments are offered to Lanoha Nurseries: perlite, compost, sand, peat moss, vermiculite, and a variety of potting mixes.

#### **Planting Depth**

A general rule of thumb for planting bulbs is to plant at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb. Most of the bulbs offered at Lanoha Nurseries have an instruction tag that will assist you in determining the correct planting depth.

#### **Fertilizing**

Bone meal or superphosphates are two recommended soil additives when planting fall bulbs. They are rich in phosphorous to help create large blooms and sturdy stems. Incorporate super phosphate or bone meal into the back fill. Following the blooming period, but while the bulb's foliage is still green, a balanced garden fertilizer, Fertilome's Gardener Special, should be applied around the bulbs stems to help it regain its vigor to re-bloom the following spring.

#### **Spacing**

There are several opinions on how to best space spring flowering bulbs. In recent years, clusters of bulbs have replaced the once familiar straight rows. Choose the style that appeals to you. If you do choose to cluster the bulbs, groupings of 5-7 tulips, 3-5 daffodils, 8-12 minor bulbs, or 3-5 hyacinths are good guidelines. If the same area will be used for spring bulbs and

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summer annuals, the cluster approach is best. Trowels, spades, or bulb augers, are available to help with bulb installation.

#### **Watering**

The water must reach and penetrate the soil deep enough to reach the roots. Water thoroughly after planting bulbs. Winter or spring rains usually provide the rest of the moisture needed until the bulbs have bloomed. If the winter is warm and dry, you may need to water again. In spring, most bulbs prefer very little water after the foliage has dried or turned yellow.

#### **After Bloom Care**

To keep bulb plants looking neat, remove the spent flowers with a sharp pruner. Cut just below the bloom and leave the stem on the plant. This does not harm the bulb and channels energy into the bulb rather than into seed production. The leaves and stems must be allowed to remain until fully dried to store energy for next year's blooms. Don't cut or pull the leaves off unless you plan to discard the bulbs after blooming. If this appears messy, leave it for at least six weeks. You can camouflage the foliage with other plants as long as you don't damage the bulbs during planting.