



## INDOOR FORCING OF SPRING FLOWERING BULBS

*Early fall is the time to make preparations for forcing bulbs for winter enjoyment indoors. Bulbs that require cold treatments for forcing include: narcissi, tulips, hyacinths, grape hyacinths, crocus and other minor bulbs. Select varieties that are listed for forcing. Let us provide easy step by step information.*

🌱 1. Select a container with drainage holes. Drainage is important to prevent bulbs from rotting. Bulbs may be forced in a plain container that may be slid into a larger more decorative one when plants are ready to be put on display.

🌱 2. Fill the container with 2 inches of a good quality potting mix combined with a handful of bone meal.

🌱 3. Press bulbs gently into the soil. Place bulbs close together but do not allow them to touch. The flat side of the tulip should face the pot. This is the side where the largest leaf will emerge creating a more attractive display.

🌱 4. Continue to fill the pot with potting mix but allow the noses of the bulb to remain exposed.

🌱 5. Water to encourage rooting and check soil for moisture frequently during the cooling period. Pots should be kept slightly moist but not wet.

🌱 6. Provide bulbs with the required cold period by placing pots in a dark location at 35 - 50 degrees Fahrenheit. The refrigerator is an excellent place to pre-cool bulbs, be aware however, ripening fruit, such as apples, gives off ethylene gas that can cause buds to be

deformed or to abort. Other cold storing areas to consider include unheated: garage, crawl space, or basement. Do not allow developing roots to freeze. Be certain to record the cooling period completion date on your calendar; too short a cold period will result in an excessively long flower stem, too short a cold period will result in a very short stem and distorted flower. 'Prepared' bulbs are bulbs that have received a few weeks pre-cooling before purchase. Prepared bulbs still require a cooling period to force, subtract the pre-cooling time off the total optimal cooling period to determine how long bulbs need to be stored in the cooling area.

🌱 7. At the completion of the cooling period, remove pots from the refrigerator, or other cooling area, and place in a cool, bright location in the house. Keep bulbs out of direct sunlight.

🌱 8. When plants are about 2 inches tall, place pot in a warmer, sunny location to encourage blooms. Turn pots often to ensure that all of the plant is exposed to the light. You may expect bulbs to flower in about four weeks after removing from cold storage.

🌱 9. Keeping pots out of direct sunlight when plants are blooming and also providing cool evenings will help prolong the flowering time. If treated properly, you will enjoy your flowering bulbs for about 10 days.

🌱 10. It is best to treat forced bulbs as annuals and dispose of them when they are through blooming.

### PRE-COOLING TIMES

Crocus	.....14 – 15 weeks
Hyacinths (prepared)	.....10 – 12 weeks
Hyacinths (unprepared)	.....11 – 13 weeks
Iris reticulata	.....12 – 13 weeks
Muscari armeniacum	.....14 – 15 weeks
Narcissi	.....12 – 15 weeks
Tulips	.....13 – 17 weeks