

Growth cycle of a spring flowering bulb

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1. Spring flowering bulbs are planted in the fall. The best time is from mid September through October. They can be planted in November and into December, but the later the planting date, the less time for the bulb to develop a root system before the ground freezes. Many times late-planted bulbs will be smaller the first year and have less flowers, but should recover for the next year.
2. In the fall the bulbs develop their root system. This requires energy, which is obtained from the stored reserves in the bulb. More precisely the scales or modified leaves are where the energy supply is stored.
3. In the spring when the soil warms up and the day length increases, the bulbs will start to push out of the ground. Appearing first will be the foliage, followed by the flowers. At this time the plant is using the remaining energy stored in the bulb and it will wither away. The plants produce new foliage and start the process of photosynthesis, and the new bulb (from an existing bud) will now begin to form.
4. After the flowers die back, the plants will go through a stage of dying back to the ground. This could take up to 1-2 months. During this period of time food is made (by photosynthesis) and stored in the bulb for next year's growth. It is very important that the foliage is allowed to die back 75% or more before they are cut back.
5. Next spring the entire process starts over again.