

Sacramento Bulb Planting Schedule

Choose plump firm bulbs that feel heavy for their size. Avoid soft or shriveled bulbs. Pocket gophers, chipmunks, ground squirrels and mice relish many bulbs (tulips are favorites). Fortunately, they avoid daffodils and other narcissus because of their bitter taste. The best ways to avoid damage include planting bulbs in raised beds, in wire baskets sunk in the ground or in pots or other containers. Chill crocus, tulips and hyacinths in a paper bag in the refrigerator crisper section for at least 6 weeks before planting to insure strong stems and blooms. Label the bag. Do not store near apples or other fruit (they give off ethylene gas which can destroy flowers inside the bulbs).

Name	Type	Planting Time	Planting Depth (in inches)	Spacing (in inches)	Bloom Time**	Comments
Allium	bulb	Sept-Nov	As deep as bulb height or width, whichever is greater	Small: 4-6 Large: 8-12	s, su	Lift and divide only after clumps become crowded.
Amaryllis (naked lady)	bulb	Feb	Tops even with, or slightly above soil surface	12	su	Bloom appears 6 weeks after foliage dies back in late spring or early summer. See <i>Hippeastrum</i> for giant amaryllis.
Anemone	tuber	Sept-Dec	1-2	6-8	s, su, f	Plant in full sun. Plant tubers scarred side up.
Babiana	corm	Nov	4	3	s	Naturalize if soil is well drained and relatively warm.
Begonia (tuberous)	tuber	Mar-May	Top even with soil surface	2	su, f	Best in containers. Lift tubers when leaves fall off; store in cool, dry place until spring.
Calla (white)	rhizome	Oct-Apr	4-6	12-24	s, su	Needs year-round moisture. Grow in light shade.
Calla (dwarf colored)	rhizome	Oct-Apr	2	8-12	s, su	Plant with "eyes" up. Withhold water in late summer or early fall to encourage dormancy. Grow in light shade.
Canna	rhizome	Feb-Apr	2-4	18-24	su, f	Can be grown in large pots. Cut each stem to ground after bloom.
Crocsmia	corm	Feb	2	3	s, su	Good cut flower. Needs no winter protection.
Crocus	corm	Sept-Oct	2-4	4	w, s	Won't naturalize where winters are warm. Pre-chill as for tulips.
Daffodil/ Narcissus	bulb	Sept-Dec	Small: 3-4; medium: 4-5; large: 5-6	Small: 2-3 Large: 6-8	w, s	In pots, set bulb with tip just below soil surface.
Dahlia	tuberous root	Feb-May	3	Small: 12-24 Large: 4-5 feet	su, f	Plant with "eyes" facing up. When staking tall varieties, the "eye" should just touch the stake.
Freesia	corm	Sept-Nov	2	2-3	s	Plant the corms with pointed ends up. Naturalize well.
Gladiolus	corm	Feb-Apr	4 times deeper than corm height	Small: 4 Large: 6	s, su, f	Superb cut flower. Plant at 1-2 week intervals over 4-6 weeks for longer bloom period.
Hippeastrum (giant amaryllis)	bulb	Oct-Feb	Upper half of bulb above soil surface (in pots)	2 (from pot edge to bulb)	s	Usually grown in pots. Water and feed regularly all summer until leaves turn yellow; withhold water and let plant dry out.
Hyacinth	bulb	Nov-Dec	6 * (see below)	4-6	s	Pre-chill in refrigerator for at least 6 weeks (buy in September-October).
Iris - bearded	rhizome	Sept-Oct	Top just below soil surface	12-24	s	Some reblooming (spring and fall) varieties becoming available.
Iris - Dutch	bulb	Sept-Dec	4	3-4	s	Naturalizes well.
Lily	bulb	Feb-Mar Sept-Oct	Small: 2-3; medium: 3-4; large: 4-6	12	su, f	Many species and hybrids available with variable bloom times. Except for dry-summer natives, provide moisture all year.
Muscari	bulb	Sept-Oct	2-3	3	s	Known as grape hyacinth. Naturalizes well.
Ranunculus	tuber	Sept-Dec	1-2	4-5; 6-8 (in pots)	s	Soak tubers in water for 45 minutes before planting. Plant with "prongs" down.
Scilla	bulb	Sept-Oct	2-4	4-6	s	Leave for several years before lifting and dividing.
Sparaxis	corm	Sept-Oct	2-3	2-4	s	Long bloom period in early spring.
Tigridia	bulb	Feb	2-4	4-8	su	Known as tiger flower. Gophers are fond of bulbs.
Tritonia	corm	Sept-Oct	2-3	2-4	s	Naturalizes well. Needs regular watering until flowers fade.
Tuberose	rhizome	Feb-Apr	2	4-6	su, f	Will bloom year after year in Sacramento area.
Tulip	bulb	Nov-Dec	6-8 * (see below)	4-8	s	Pre-chill in refrigerator for at least 6 weeks (buy in September-October).
Watsonia	corm	Sept-Oct	4	6	s, su	Corms can be left undisturbed for many years.
Zephranthes	bulb	Anytime	1-2	3	su, f	May rebloom if kept alternately wet and dry. Best to plant September-October.

* In pots, plant with top of the bulb just above the soil surface

** Approximate bloom time: s=spring; su=summer; f=fall; w=winter