

FLOWERS · A SUNNY GARDEN BED WITH COOL WINTERS

Let's grow tulip.

Tulipa 'Apeldoorn' — Darwin Hybrid Group

This plan is for **Apeldoorn Darwin hybrid tulip**

Nine bulbs for a small patch of spring.

2 × 2 ft garden patch

9 bulbs

Before you start

For a cold-winter bed, plant once soil cools to about 50–55°F, with time to root before freezing. In warm-winter areas, confirm prechilling and local timing before buying.

Growing in a pot?

Follow the 12-bulb container plan ↓. The nine-bulb recipe is for a garden bed.

By [jennyzhuang](#)

Sources checked September 24, 2026 [View sources](#)



LIGHT

Loves spring sun

Choose a bed receiving at least 6 hours of sun while leaves are growing.



WATER

Moist roots, dry summer rest

Water after planting, then supplement only when the growing root zone dries.



FEEDING

No extra food to start

Healthy bulbs store the food for their first flowers.



Tulips, especially their bulbs, are harmful if eaten. Keep spare bulbs away from children and pets, and never store them with edible onions.

BEFORE YOU START



Garden-bed kit.

For a pot, use the container shopping list.

- ✓ 9 'Apeldoorn' Darwin hybrid tulip bulbs
- ✓ A trowel or bulb planter, ruler, and watering can
- ✓ A plant marker; gloves if handling bulbs irritates your skin

THE SOIL

Ordinary well-drained garden soil; avoid a spot that stays wet or receives heavy summer irrigation.

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

A SEPARATE OUTDOOR POT OPTION



How to grow tulips in a pot.

Start with **12 dormant Darwin hybrid or Triumph bulbs** of one variety and an **18-inch-wide pot with 15 inches of usable inside depth**. Choose a sturdy container with drainage holes and a sheltered, sunny spring position. Check its winter destination before filling it.



THE CONTAINER

18 in. wide × 15 in. deep

Inside depth, not the outside height including feet. In a tapered pot, check the width where the bulbs will sit.



THE STARTING AMOUNT

12 bulbs · one layer

Buy firm, flowering-size bulbs. Use fewer if their actual size leaves no gaps or presses them against the wall.

RHS suggests about 12 bulbs for an 18-inch pot. The 15-inch depth is our roomy editorial choice. This recipe is separate from the nine-bulb garden bed and from the supplied photographs, whose varieties, pot measurements and dates are unconfirmed.

What to have ready

- The draining pot, 12 labeled bulbs, a ruler and watering can.
- Fresh commercial **potting mix**, enough to finish 1 inch below the rim. Pot shape changes the volume; follow the container's capacity when buying mix.

- A plant label and a winter location that supplies the needed cold without severe freezing of the pot.

Use container mix, not garden soil or pure homemade compost. Keep the drainage holes open; a layer of gravel takes away root space. For this first-season display, **buy no additional fertilizer**.

Choose the winter route first

Cold-winter gardens

Plant during your local fall bulb season. A pot is more exposed than the ground: arrange protected cold storage or sink it into a well-drained garden bed. An unheated garage can work only if its actual temperature is suitable. Avoid repeated freezing and thawing; an exposed balcony is not enough protection.

Warm-winter gardens

Ask the supplier for locally suitable **prechilled bulbs**, their completed cold treatment and planting window. Plant promptly as instructed. Plan for a seasonal display; do not assume a mild winter will provide enough cold.

Confirm the required cold period for your bulbs. Rutgers gives 35–45°F as a protected-storage range for fall bulb containers; this is a temperature guide, not a universal tulip flowering schedule. Monitor the space with a thermometer. Dry-bulb prechilling and chilling a planted pot are different methods.

Plant the dormant bulbs

01 Measure from the finished surface

Mark the final mix level 1 inch below the rim. For these large-flowered tulips, place the **flat bulb base 6–8 inches below that line**, unless the supplier specifies otherwise. Leave mix beneath the bulbs for roots.

02 Arrange one layer and cover

Fill to the base level, then set bulbs point upward with a small gap between neighbors and no contact with the pot wall. Cover completely to the marked surface. The bulb's height is included in the depth: a 2-inch bulb at a 7-inch base depth has 5 inches of mix over its tip.

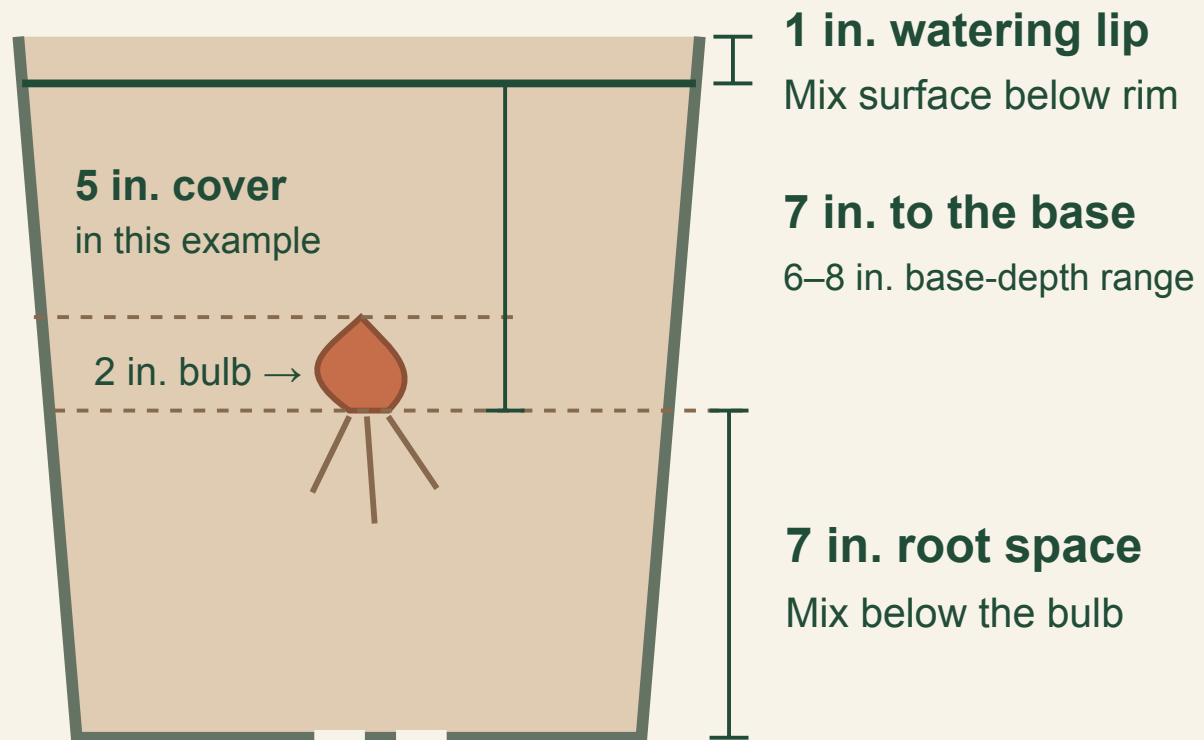
03

Water, drain and label

Water slowly until excess escapes below, then let the pot drain. Empty any saucer. Label the variety and your actual planting date. During winter, check the mix periodically and water only as it begins drying; do not let it become bone dry or stay saturated.

One outdoor pot. Room below the bulbs.

18 in. wide · 15 in. usable inside depth



Drainage holes stay open. No gravel layer.

Illustrative dimensions, not measurements of the supplied photos.

At a 6–8-inch base depth, this 15-inch-deep pot leaves 6–8 inches for roots after the watering lip. The drawing uses a hypothetical 2-inch bulb. View larger diagram. Iowa State defines planting depth at the bulb base.

Already bought tulips in leaf or bud? Keep their existing planting level and drainage. The deep planting instructions above apply to dormant bulbs. [See the supplied pot photographs](#) for visible growth and after-flowering examples.

From spring shoots to summer rest

As shoots develop, move protected pots gradually into a bright, sheltered outdoor position suited to the weather. Check moisture more often as leaves grow. When the mix begins drying, water the root zone and drain; the correct amount depends on the pot, not a fixed gallon dose.

After flowering, remove the faded flower and developing seedpod. Keep healthy green leaves in the light and continue watering as needed until they die naturally. The photographs of short stems do not specify where every tulip should be cut.

Keeping the bulbs? A container feeding program may help replenish them: use a high-potassium liquid feed at its labeled container dilution and interval while leaves are green, accounting for fertilizer already in the mix. Stop when leaves yellow. Once fully dormant, keep bulbs dry over summer or lift, dry and store sound bulbs for the next local planting season. Reflowering remains uncertain.

Container sources checked October 1, 2026: RHS: pot size and seasonal feeding; Rutgers: fall bulbs in containers (PDF); Extension: protecting potted tulips in winter; UF/IFAS: warm-climate chilling; RHS: bulb care; Iowa State: after flowering. This is a source-based planting example, not a growing trial.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN



A small garden patch. Here's the plan.

A sunny garden bed with cool winters. Start with **bulbs**.



THE SPACE

2 × 2 ft garden patch

A 3-by-3 grid, 6 inches from one bulb center to the next, with 6-inch edge margins. This plan is in the ground.



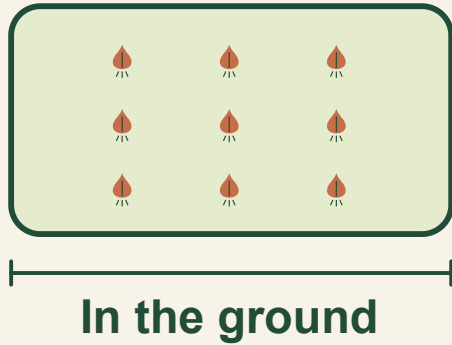
HOW MANY

9 bulbs

Buy 9 firm, healthy 'Apeldoorn' bulbs, without mold or soft areas.

THE SPACE

2 × 2 ft garden patch



START WITH

9 bulbs

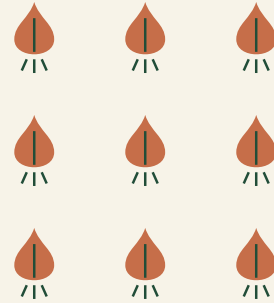


Illustration · not to scale

2 × 2 ft garden patch · 9 bulbs A 3-by-3 grid, 6 inches from one bulb center to the next, with 6-inch edge margins. This plan is in the ground. Buy 9 firm, healthy 'Apeldoorn' bulbs, without mold or soft areas. Original illustration; not to scale.

Before you buy: will your winter do the chilling?

Reliably cold winters

Use the in-ground plan here. Plant when soil has cooled to about **50–55°F or lower**, while it is still workable, with time for roots to grow before freezing. Your local planting window matters more than the month on a calendar.

Warm winters

Confirm chilling needs with a local bulb supplier **before ordering**. Choose suitable prechilled bulbs and their local planting window. A warm-winter display may last only one season.

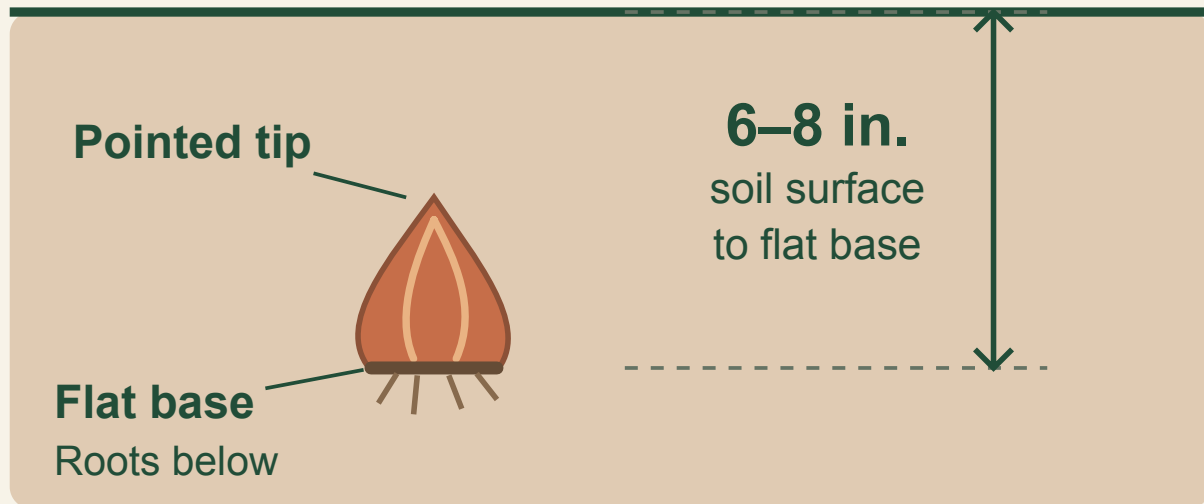
Timing: Wisconsin Extension. Warm-region chilling: Johnny's growing guidance.

How deep, and which way up?

Point up. Flat base down.

Depth ends at the base of the bulb.

Final soil surface



Not 6–8 in. of soil above the tip.

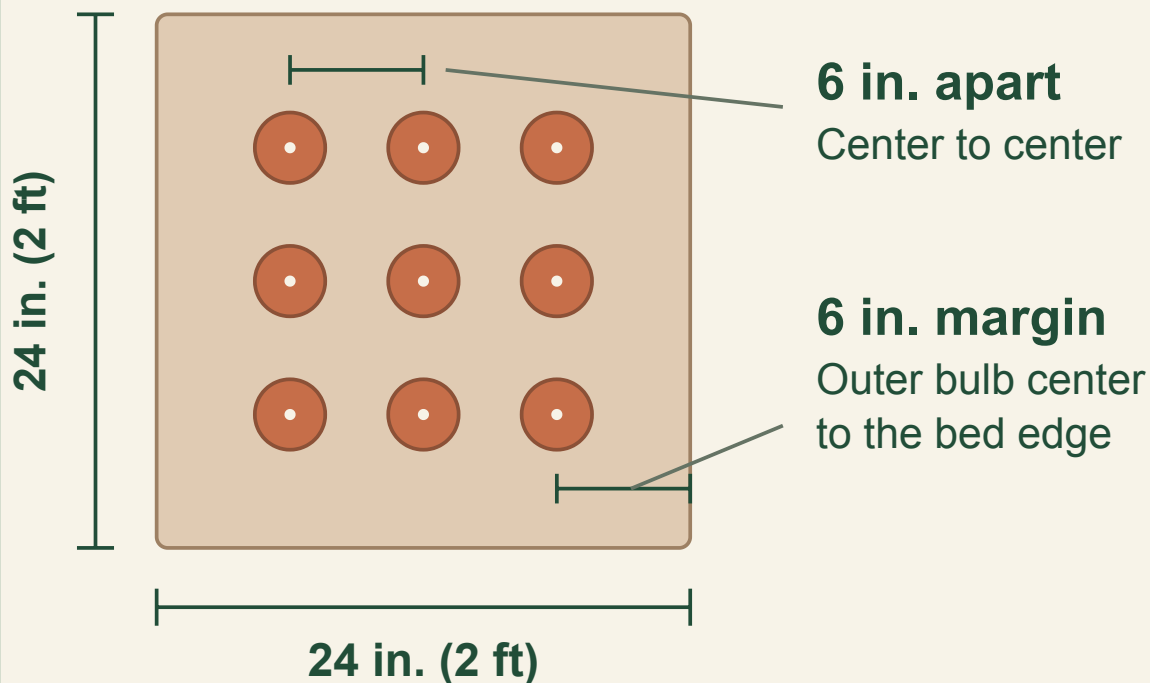
Darwin hybrid garden bulbs · schematic, not to scale

Measure to the flat base. For these Darwin hybrid bulbs, the base sits 6–8 inches below the finished soil surface. The bulb's own height is included in that depth. Iowa State's depth table uses this convention.

Where do the nine bulbs go?

Nine bulbs. One small patch.

Top view · 3 rows with 3 bulbs in each



Mark 6, 12, and 18 in. along both sides.

One bulb at each crossing · layout for a garden bed

Mark 6, 12, and 18 inches from one corner along each side. Put one bulb at each crossing: $3 \times 3 = 9$. The 6-inch edge margins plus two 6-inch gaps make the 24-inch width. This is our easy-to-measure layout within Iowa State's spacing guidance.

01

Check the bulbs, then mark the grid

Start with 9 firm bulbs. Set aside any that are soft, shriveled, or visibly moldy and ask the seller for a replacement. In a 24-inch square, mark rows and columns at 6, 12, and 18 inches from one edge. Put one bulb at each crossing.

02 Plant point upward, base downward

Dig so each bulb's flat base rests 6–8 inches below the final soil surface. Point the narrow tip upward and the root-bearing base downward. Measure the hole depth to the base; it is not 6–8 inches of soil over the tip.

03 Backfill and water once

Return the garden soil, then water slowly to settle it around the bulbs. Choose a freely draining bed. Skip fertilizer at planting for this first-season plan; do not add fresh manure.

04 Mark the bed and watch the weather

Label the spot before covering the bulbs. In the cold-winter route, winter supplies the chill; warm-winter bulbs need the separate prechilling route below. During active growth, check the soil in dry spells rather than watering on a fixed calendar.

Other ways to start

Buy a potted spring display

For flowers this spring without an autumn start, buy nursery-grown tulips already rooted and in bud. Keep the pot watered and drained in a cool, bright outdoor spot suited to the weather; that is a seasonal display rather than this fall-planted bed recipe.

Keep daughter bulbs

Tulips can make small offsets beside the original bulb. If lifting after leaves die back, separate sound offsets and replant at the next suitable fall planting time. Small offsets may take additional seasons to reach flowering size; seed is much slower.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE



Garden-bed care at a glance.



WATER WHEN

Water after planting. During fall rooting and spring growth, water deeply if the bulb root zone is drying. Avoid keeping dormant bulbs wet in summer.



FERTILIZER

No added fertilizer for this starting plan



AMOUNT

None



WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

No fertilizer dose to calculate.



HOW OFTEN TO FEED

No routine feeding.



WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

No extra feed for the first spring. Keep green leaves afterward; use a soil test if growth remains weak in later years.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

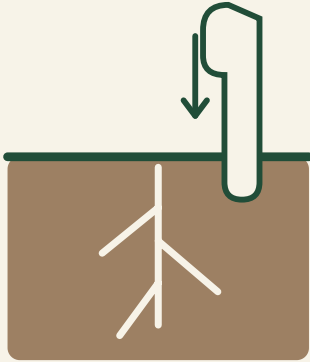


When to water the garden bed.

Water the bed after planting. Through fall rooting and spring growth, check weekly during dry spells; if soil in the bulb root zone is drying, water slowly and deeply. Skip watering when rain has kept it moist. Do not keep dormant bulbs wet through summer. Drainage matters more than following an every-seven-days schedule.

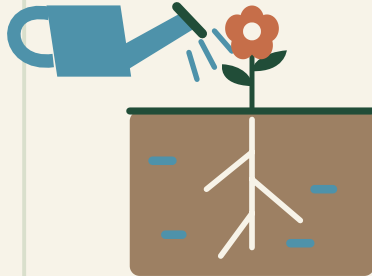
CHECK

Root zone
begins drying



WATER

Slowly, at
the roots

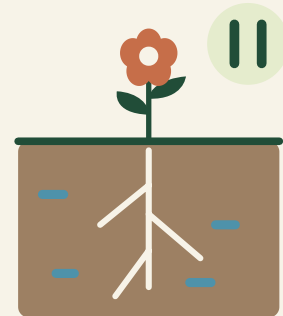


No standing water

Illustration · not to scale

WAIT IF WET

Moist soil?
Wait to water



Check before watering. Water after planting. During fall rooting and spring growth, water deeply if the bulb root zone is drying. Avoid keeping dormant bulbs wet in summer. Original illustration; not to scale.

The easy rule

Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

02 / PLANT FOOD

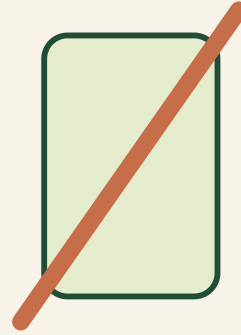
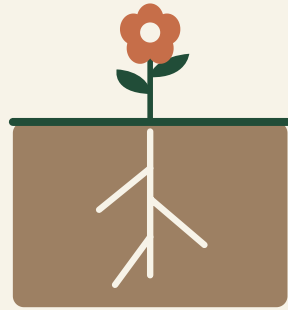


Feeding the garden bed.

Buy no fertilizer for this first spring. Iowa State notes that fertilizer at planting is usually unnecessary: a healthy bulb already carries the reserves for its upcoming flower. Avoid adding bone meal automatically.

THIS STARTING PLAN

No added fertilizer



Skip extra feed

Follow the conditions in this plan

Illustration · not to scale

None No fertilizer dose to calculate. No routine feeding. No extra feed for the first spring. Keep green leaves afterward; use a soil test if growth remains weak in later years. Original illustration; not to scale.

THE SIMPLE FEEDING PLAN

The bulb brings its first meal.

If keeping the bulbs for later years, leave their green leaves in place so they can replenish the bulb. In a reasonably fertile bed, begin without extra feed; investigate persistent weak growth with a soil test. Fertilizer does not substitute for winter chill, sunlight, or healthy foliage.

03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT



Spring flowers and possible repeat bloom

'Apeldoorn' is a red Darwin hybrid that flowers in spring; height is commonly around 20–24 inches, depending on conditions. A single planting flowers once in a season. Darwin hybrids can return, but repeat flowering is less certain in warm winters, wet summers, or heavily irrigated beds.

Fall planting and cold-winter requirements

For a naturally cold-winter bed, plant as soil cools to around 50–55°F or lower, while it is still workable; leave time for rooting before it freezes. Wisconsin Extension uses soil temperature, not one nationwide planting month. In warm-winter regions, confirm the cultivar's chilling needs before buying. Order locally suitable prechilled bulbs and follow the supplier's delivery and planting window. Refrigerating an unknown bulb for an arbitrary number of weeks is not a reliable substitute.

For regional planting windows, [find your local Cooperative Extension office](#) ↗.

PHOTO NOTES



Tulips in pots: photo notes.

Bulbs, flower buds, blooms, and green foliage in containers. Photos supplied by jennyzhuang; cultivars, pot sizes, and dates are unconfirmed. The Apeldoorn garden-bed plan above is a separate project.

Three things to notice in these pots

Bulb layout is not planting depth

The nine visible bulbs show an arrangement on potting mix. For a new outdoor pot, **follow the bulb packet's planting depth** and leave about 1 inch below the rim for watering. Indoor forcing uses a different method and may leave bulb tips exposed.

RHS: outdoor containers · Iowa State: indoor forcing

Flowers finished? Keep the green leaves

Remove the faded flower and developing seedpod. **Leave healthy green leaves in the light** to help replenish the bulb. Remove foliage only after it naturally browns and dies. The short stems in the photo are not a cutting-height rule.

Iowa State: after-flowering care

Check the soil even after flowering

While leaves are green, **water when the potting mix starts to dry** and let excess drain. Once foliage dies back, protect dormant tulip bulbs from summer wet. The watering photo shows an action, not a measured dose or fertilizer application.

RHS: watering bulbs through the season

These supplemental photo-care notes were source-checked September 30, 2026. This is an editorial review date, not a photograph date.



Nine bulbs arranged on potting mix; the visible layout does not establish the final planting depth.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.



Closed buds with color visible at their tips, above green leaves.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.



Pale pink tulips in a container beside a balcony railing.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.



Flowering tulips grouped in several containers. The pictured cultivars are unconfirmed.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.



Green leaves remain after flower stems are shortened. Keep healthy foliage until it naturally browns and dies back.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.



Watering around green leaves. Check the potting mix; water when it starts to dry, then let excess drain.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.



Red-pink flowers above green leaves, viewed against the sky.

Photo supplied by jennyzhuang.

Something looking off?

Do tulips come back every year?

Sometimes. Darwin hybrids are among the more reliable garden tulips, but climate and drainage matter. Treat repeat flowering as a possibility, not a promise; replace bulbs when the display weakens.

Can I cut off the leaves after flowering?

Wait until they yellow and die naturally. Remove the spent flower head, but keep healthy green leaves exposed to light. Tying or braiding them reduces the leaf area feeding the bulb.

Can I grow tulips from seeds or a cut stem?

A cut flower stem will not grow a new bulb. Seeds take years to make flowering-size bulbs and do not reliably reproduce a named cultivar. Buy bulbs for this spring-flower project.



Winter chilling and care after flowering

Check that bulbs get a cold winter

Chill requirements vary with the tulip and the supplier's prior treatment. In warm-winter locations, ask what cold treatment the bulbs have already received and when to plant them locally. If following a supplier's refrigerator-chilling instructions, keep bulbs away from ripening fruit and do not freeze them. A sunny balcony pot is a different project with its own winter protection and drainage needs.

Remove faded heads and let leaves die back

When petals fall, remove the spent flower head before it forms a seedpod. Keep the green stem and leaves; they rebuild the bulb. Once foliage is fully yellow-brown and dry, remove it. Leave sound bulbs in a well-drained bed that stays relatively dry in summer. Keep the marker so summer planting does not damage them. Fewer flowers next year can reflect climate or declining bulbs, not an automatic need for more fertilizer.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- [Iowa State: tulip selection, fertilizer needs, and aftercare ↗](https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/all-about-tulips)
<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/all-about-tulips>
- [Iowa State: Darwin hybrid bulb-base depth and spacing ↗](https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/selecting-and-planting-spring-blooming-bulbs)
<https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/selecting-and-planting-spring-blooming-bulbs>
- [Wisconsin Extension: cool-soil planting and dry summer rest ↗](https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/planting-spring-bulbs/)
<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/planting-spring-bulbs/>
- [Johnny's Selected Seeds: warm-region chilling and handling ↗](https://www.johnnyseeds.com/growers-library/flowers/tulips/tulip-key-growing-information.html)
<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/growers-library/flowers/tulips/tulip-key-growing-information.html>
- [RHS: tulip growing, propagation, and repeat flowering ↗](https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/tulip/growing-guide)
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/tulip/growing-guide>
- [RHS: Apeldoorn cultivar trial, red flowers, and height ↗](https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/trials-awards/plant-trial-results/tulipa-late-single-viridiflora-darwin)
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/trials-awards/plant-trial-results/tulipa-late-single-viridiflora-darwin>

Something needs updating? [Suggest a correction](#)

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.