

**DREER'S HINTS ON
THE GROWING OF
BULBS, PP. 3-61**

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Dreer's Hints on the Growing of Bulbs, pp. 3-61 by Various

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DREER'S
HINTS ON THE GROWING OF
BULBS

A BOOK FOR AMATEURS

WRITTEN BY OUR OWN EXPERTS AND INCLUDING
A NUMBER OF CULTURAL NOTES BY THE WELL
KNOWN HORTICULTURAL WRITER
MISS IDA D. BENNETT
AND OTHERS

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CONTENTS

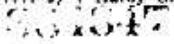
	PAGE
A BORDER OF HARDY BULBS	8-9
BULBS IN THE GRASS	9-10
BULBS IN PREPARED FINER	12
INDOOR CULTURE OF BULBS	11
PLANTING TABLE	70
SOIL FOR POT PLANTS	11-12
SPRING BLOOMING BULBS	6-7
THE VALUE OF A COLD FRAME FOR BULBS	12-14
WHEN TO PLANT	5-6

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INDEX TO CULTURAL HINTS

	PAGE		PAGE
African Corn Lily	42	Cyclamen	27-28
Allium	15	Dahlia	28-30
Alstromeria	16	Daffodil	48-52
Amaryllis	16-17	Day Lily	35-36
Amazon Lily	31-32	Dicentra	30
Amorphophallus	17	Dielytra	30
Anemone	17-18	Dioscorea	30
Anthericum	18-19	Dogs-tooth Violet	31
Apios	19	Elephant's Ear	22
Arabian Star of Bethlehem	52	Eranthis	30
Arum Lily	23	Eremurus	31
Astilbe	56	Erythronium	31
Autumn Crocus	24	Eucharis	31-32
Autumn Daffodil	56-57	Fairy Lillies	64
Begonia	19-21	Feathered Hyacinths	47-48
Bleeding Heart	30	Flags	40-41
Boussingaultia	21	Fleur de Luce	40-41
Caladium	22	Freesia	32
Calla	23	Fritillaria	27-33
Chequered Lily	33	Funkia	33
Chilian Lily	16	Galanthus	55-56
Chinese Sacred Lily	48-52	Galtonia	39
Chionodoxa	24	Gladiolus	34
Christmas Rose	35	Glory of the Snow	24
Cinnamon Vine	30	Gloxinia	34-35
Colchicum	24	Golden Lily Leek	15
Convallaria	45-46	Grape Hyacinth	47-48
Crocus	24-26	Guinea Hen Flower	33
Crown Imperial	27	Hardy Gloxinia	39-40

Records: All. 12-23 36



INDEX—Continued

	PAGE		PAGE
Harlequin Flower	56	Ranunculus	54
Helleborus	35	Richardia	23
Hemerocallis	35-36	Scarborough Lily	63-64
Hippeastrum	16-17	Scilla	54-55
Hyacinth	36-39	Seal Flower	30
Hyacinthus	39	Snake's Head Flower	33
Incarvillea	39-40	Snowdrop	55-56
Iris	40-41	Spanish Blue Bells	54-55
Ismene	41	Sparaxis	56
Ixia	42	Spiraea	56
Jonquils	48-52	Spire Lily	39
Knight's Star Lily	16-17	Spring Snowflake	42-43
Leucojum	42-43	Spring Star Flower	57
Lilies	43-45	Squill	54-55
Lilium	43-45	St. Bruno's Lily	18-19
Lily of the Nile	23	Sternbergia	56-57
Lily of the Valley	45-46	Striped Squill	54
Lyre Flower	30	Sword Lily	34
Madeira Vine	21	Tiger Flower	57
Meadow Saffron	24	Tigridis	57
Mexican Star of Bethlehem	47	Trillium	57
Mignonette Vine	21	Trinity Flower	57
Milla	47	Triteleia	57
Montbretia	47	Tuberose	58
Muscari	47-48	Tuberous-rooted Wistaria	19
Narcissus	48-52	Tulip	58-63
Orinthogalum	52	Vallota	63-64
Oxalis	52-53	Wake Robin	57
Paeony	53-54	White Cape Hyacinth	39
Pearls of Spain	47-48	Windflower	17-18
Peruvian Daffodil	47	Winter Aconite	30
Plantain Lily	33	Wood Hyacinth	54-55
Polianthes	58	Wood Lily	57
Puschkinia	54	Zephyranthes	64
Rainbow Flower	40-41	Zephyr Flower	64

HINTS ON THE GROWING OF BULBS

TO the lover of flowers there is no class of plants so much prized as those which are produced from bulbs. The reason is easily found because within the bulbs are stored all the future glory of leaves and flowers, only requiring the simplest culture to develop them in their highest perfection. Success is therefore the rule.

Another reason why bulbs are prized so highly is because a large part of them produce their flowers in very early spring when the rest of nature is asleep. Then it is that a clump of Snowdrops, Scillas, or Chionodoxas impart to the garden an air of warmth and cheer that cannot be accomplished in any other way. Following these modest flowers come the showier Crocus, Narcissus, Hyacinths, Tulips, etc. in all their dazzling colors, keeping up a continuous display well into the summer. With no other material can be secured such a wealth of charming flowers of infinite variety of form and coloring, with so little trouble and at so small an outlay.

To succeed with bulbs it is necessary to begin right by getting sound bulbs of good size, and we would warn intending purchasers against buying cheap, undersized bulbs, and expect the fine results obtained from such as we offer. Our sources of supply are the best in this country and abroad, the leading growers of the world having for years supplied us with their choicest stock.

When to Plant.

To the beginner we would emphasize the fact that autumn and not springtime is the time to plant all kinds of spring-flowering bulbs. The greater part of the bulbs described in this book are ready to ship by the second week in September. Some sorts do not mature until October and November. Orders for all sorts should be placed as early as possible and the various varieties can be forwarded as they mature.

As a general rule the bulbs should be planted in October and November so that the roots may make a good growth before cold weather sets in; but we have seen splendid results

6 DREER'S HINTS ON THE GROWING OF BULBS

from Tulips, Hyacinths and other bulbs that were not set out until along towards the close of December, but as the ground is frequently frozen by the middle of November it is much safer to plant earlier. Bulbs of all kinds require a moderately rich soil that has been well manured for previous crops, or else apply well-rotted cow or sheep manure or bone meal; fresh manure is injurious to bulbs. The soil should be well drained and no good results can be obtained without free drainage.

In planting, the bulbs should be placed from an inch to four inches or more below the surface, according to the size of the bulb. A good rule to go by is to cover the bulbs with soil one and a half times their own depth. When the surface of the ground freezes hard the bed should be covered with three or four inches of leaves, litter or strawy manure, which should be removed in early spring. Too early and heavy covering is liable to start top growth prematurely, which would likely be injured in March by freezing and thawing. After flowering, if the beds are wanted for late spring plantings, take up the bulbs, tops and roots, and "heel in" in a trench in some corner of the garden until the bulbs mature, which is indicated by the leaves turning yellow and drying, after which they should be lifted and spread out in an airy place to dry and kept in a cool, dark place until time for replanting the following autumn.

To the above general directions for outdoor culture we are pleased to add the following article written for this book by the well-known horticultural writer Miss Ida D. Bennett.

Spring-Blooming Bulbs.

The hardy spring-blooming bulbs form one of the most valuable of all the garden's assets. The original investment increases in capital as well as returning a royal dividend in bloom and fragrance with the recurrence of each period of bloom. Moreover, they are negotiable investments, as they may be lifted and transferred to a new home when the changes of business make such a fitting necessary, with no loss of capital and often much to the benefit of the individual members of the planting.

There are so many varieties of blooming bulbs and so many of them of such simple culture that the least experienced need not hesitate to undertake the growing of at least a few.

For outdoor culture of the various sorts the conditions of soil preparation, fertilizing and general culture are much the same,

and given the knowledge of the requirements of the more exacting and the less particular ones fall into line naturally.

The most satisfactory soil for growing bulbs is a fibrous loam, well supplied with sharp sand. It should possess good natural drainage. I have not found low, damp spots favorable for growing even that least exacting of bulbs—the *Narcissus Poeticus*, nor do they do well in very shady corners, though the earlier bloomers will do well under trees where the foliage does not mature until the season of bloom is passed and where the sunshine reaches the bulbs some time during the day.

Where the soil is of clay, or still worse of hard pan, it will be really necessary to remove it and substitute in its place some good garden or meadow soil. Sods thrown in a heap and allowed to decay make the finest kind of soil for beds and with it may be mixed a moderate quantity of old well-decayed manure, or, better still, the lower part of the bed may be filled with this mixture but the clear earth used in that portion with which the bulbs will come in immediate contact. Fresh manure should never be used in a bulb bed.

Sand is, perhaps, the special guardian and friend of all kinds of bulbs, and its liberal use should always be resorted to when there is any cause for doubting the success of a planting.

Where old, well-rotted manure is not available, bone meal is a very satisfactory substitute.

The best time for planting spring-blooming bulbs is, of course, in the fall, as soon as they can be secured, and in this connection it is not amiss to suggest that it is well to place one's orders early, in order that one may be promptly served and have first choice of the bulbs as they come from the growers. Tulips, *Narcissus*, *Hyacinths* and other spring bulbs are the first to arrive in this country, and may usually be had in September, and it is an advantage to get them planted early so that they may make some root growth before the ground freezes, but if one is not able to plant early, this fact should not deter one from planting late as very excellent results very often follow very late planting; especially is this true of the Japanese Lilies, which I have sometimes planted as late as Christmas with excellent results, though it was necessary to break the ground with an axe in order to do this. However, if one is anticipating the planting, a few inches of rough litter will keep the ground open for a reasonable time.