



How to plant bulbs

If you are looking to brighten your outdoor space as well as attract pollinators, planting bulbs in autumn ready for spring-flowering is an easy and impactful change to make. This activity can teach learners about naming a variety of common garden plants which come from a bulb, as well as practice planning and teamwork by taking action to improve their learning environment.

Teaching time

up to 30 minutes

Learning outcomes

- use the appropriate tools for planting
- make decisions about how to improve their outdoor space
- name some common plants and parts of a plant

Safety note: some bulbs, such as Hyacinth, Narcissus (Daffodil) and Tulip can cause skin irritation and are toxic if eaten – take care when planting and ensure learners wear gardening gloves. Remember to check for allergies and ensure your group do not eat them.

Step by step

Decide with learners where you'd like to plant your bulbs, and what kind of bulbs you'd like to grow. You can look at books, catalogues and websites for inspiration and examples. Crocus are ideal for learning settings because they are low growing and won't get knocked or blow over. You may want to plant a variety of bulbs to help learners identify and name a variety of plants.

You could discuss a bulb's life cycle at this point, and how you will be planting them ready for them to sprout in the spring.

You can use a map of your outdoor space or go outdoors to work out how many bulbs you will need. Activities such as [Measuring in nature](#) can help younger learners to think about space. Check the planting distances for each type of bulb – you can add more bulbs to make your display look fuller.

Learners can help to dig out turf with bulb planters or trowels where the bulbs are to be planted.

Plant the bulb at the recommended depth, usually 2.5 times the height of the bulb. If you are being generous, put more than one bulb in each hole.

Cover the hole with soil once planted.

It's a good idea to rope the area off, or make a sign that lets people know there are bulbs planted, so it doesn't get mown or trampled when the new buds appear in the spring.

Green Skills



Suitable for

Early Years
Key Stage 1

Location

Outdoors

Season

Autumn
Winter

What you'll need

spring-flowering bulbs
trowels or bulb planters
dibbers
kneeling pads
gardening gloves

Suitable bulbs include; Allium, Crocus, Hyacinth, Narcissus (Daffodil) and Tulip

Key vocabulary

Bulb
Planting
Grow

Support and extension opportunities

Why not grow bulbs in water to show their roots developing?

The downloadable Widgit resources can support learners to plant their bulbs – why not cut up the instructions and ask learners to arrange them in the correct order?

At regular time intervals, bring learners outdoors to observe the area where the bulbs have been planted – can learners keep a plant diary of what they observe over time? By carefully cutting some of your flowers (and leaving the leaves), you can bring them inside to dissect and identify parts of the plant.



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