

# Plan and plant now for spring-flowering bulbs

By LEE REICH  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's nearly that time of year when gardeners think of spring — of planting bulbs that are going to bloom then.

Bulbs are "pre-packaged" flowers, so a green thumb isn't necessary to get those first season's blossoms. Still, a few tips for buying and planting bulbs can make for a better show next spring.



LEE REICH VIA AP

## Bigger is better

The bigger the bulbs, the bigger next spring's flowers.

Bulbs are usually sold as small, medium or top size, the measurement taken around the circumference where the bulb is fattest. Which measurements go with which size depends on the kind of bulb. Small tulips are 10 to 11 centimeters around, medium ones 11 to 12 centimeters, and anything larger is top size.

Naturally smaller bulbs include certain tulips, such as the charming waterlily tulip, as well as grape hyacinth, crocus and snow drop.

## More is better

Over time, with good care, smaller bulbs will grow into larger ones, whose show will match that of the initially fatter bulbs. One way to compensate for smaller

Over time, spring flowering bulbs, especially narcissuses like the ones shown here, can multiply and become overcrowded, at which time they need to be dug up, separated and replanted.

flowers would be to plant more of them, putting your money into buying more rather than fatter bulbs.

More is better, for any kind of bulb. Forget about planting tulips in a single file ready to march like soldiers down the edge of your front path. Instead, plan for big dollops of color, massing bulbs in circular groups or, for bolder visual effect from fewer bulbs, triangular groupings with an apex directed to your vantage point.

## Good conditions

Even though this coming spring's flowers are already packaged inside bulbs, the more sunlight the plants

bask in, the better will be the show they put on in years to come. The spot where you plant bulbs doesn't have to be bathed in sunlight all season — only until the bulbs' leaves disappear. Those leaves disappear, fortuitously, at about the same time that emerging leaves of deciduous trees finally knit together to create shade.

Another consideration in siting spring bulbs is soil drainage; most abhor wet feet. The original home of tulips, narcissus, crocuses, and many other popular spring bulbs are the mountainsides of western Asia, on ground that is parched all summer. Holland is a good

place to raise bulbs commercially because the long, cool, moist springs delay dormancy. In the long time before the bulbs' leaves finally die back, the greenery has plenty of time to fuel the following season's flower buds.

What about fertilizer? The traditional recommendation is to put bone meal into the bottom of the planting hole. Actually, a bulb does not need fertilizer to flower well its first season, only to flower well in subsequent seasons. What these bulbs really need is any balanced fertilizer — including compost — spread on the ground right after planting this fall or even in spring. Bone meal is not a particularly well-balanced fertilizer.

Good growing conditions will get these bulbs multiplying, with younger bulbs budding off the mother bulb. Overcrowded bulbs won't flower well, so they'll eventually need to be dug up; a good time is when the foliage is dying down. They can then be replanted with sufficient elbow room.

And unless your yard is free of deer, plant types of bulbs that deer don't like, such as ornamental onions, glory-of-the-snow, winter aconite, fritillaria, snowdrop, hyacinth, snowflake, squill and narcissus.

# Registration open for Gifts That Make a Difference

ASTORIA — Registration is open for Gifts That Make a Difference, the lower Columbia region's only holiday gifts fair that showcases the region's nonprofits.

The gifts fair will be held Dec. 10 in the Liberty Theater's McTavish Room.

At Gifts That Make a Difference, nonprofits can display information about their work, meet the public, sign up new volunteers, expand their mailing lists, solicit donations and network.

The gifts making the difference are donations made as holiday gifts honoring friends and family by donating in their names to their

favorite local groups.

Space fills quickly. Tables are provided in three sizes: small (\$20), large (\$30) and extra-large (\$45).

The fair is hosted by Lower Columbia Time-Bank, the Liberty Theater and United Way of Clatsop County.

Registration will remain open until Nov. 10 or until all spaces are filled.

Groups may register online at [GiftsThatMakeADifference.org](http://GiftsThatMakeADifference.org) or by email at [LCTimeBank@aol.com](mailto:LCTimeBank@aol.com). For early registration by phone or general information about the fair, call 503-741-3050.

## EVENTS

**OCT. 1 \* 7PM**  
Doors Open @ 6:00pm  
Buffet @ 6:15pm

**Blues and R&B Review**  
Produced by Jimmy James

Tickets @ [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com)  
\$15 Presale  
\$20 At the door  
\$12 Buffet ticket  
\$1 per ticket goes to  
Filling Empty Bellies  
Astoria Event Center

**OCT. 8 \* 9PM**  
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# Designers wanted for Festival of Trees

SEASIDE — Providence Seaside Hospital Foundation is currently seeking tree designers for this year's Festival of Trees, scheduled to take place on Dec. 3 at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

Designing a tree for Festival of Trees is a great opportunity for businesses, organizations, families or individuals to support the community and have a lot of fun at the same time.

Each designer decides

the theme of their tree, then decorates it to be featured at the community open house and auctioned off at the gala.

All proceeds support the Providence Seaside Hospital and local programs and services.

Designers can showcase their design talents, honor a loved one, or use this as a community service or team-building project for staff.

For more information

about designing a tree for this year's festival, contact Veronica at the Providence Seaside Foundation office by emailing [veronica.russell@providence.org](mailto:veronica.russell@providence.org) or calling 503-717-7604.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

BY JUSTIN GRAFTON STUDIOS  
Each tree at Providence Seaside Foundation's Festival of Trees fundraiser is decorated with a theme that matches the item being auctioned off during the evening gala.

