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# TULIPS

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Tulips are the most showy of the spring blooming plants in North Dakota. Their range of season is considerable. From the time some of the early dwarfs bloom until the Cottage and Darwins fade may be as much as two months.

Tulips also vary considerably in height among the different kinds. The early sorts usually are about 1 foot high. Darwins sometimes reach a height of 2 to 3 feet. Colors are rich and brilliant. These colors cover a wide range, except as yet the plant breeders have produced no true blues. There are clear whites, yellows and orange, crimson and reds, violets and purples and many vari-colored varieties.

## KINDS OF TULIPS

There are many species of tulips but the following groups will satisfy the average gardener:

1. Early single tulips of small size. These are used for early bedding and are excellent for early bloom in the home planting.
2. Cottage tulips. These are the main season kinds.
3. Darwin tulips. Tall stately flowers that wind up the tulip season with a fine display of rich deep colors in crimson, red, purple and white.

## PLANTING INFORMATION

Plant small early tulips 4 inches deep (to bottom of hole) and 4 to 6 inches apart. Plant the larger Cottage and Darwin kinds 6 inches deep and 6 to 9 inches apart. Place all bulbs of the same kind at the same depth, otherwise, they will not bloom at the same time.

Tulips can be planted in North Dakota any time from September until frost makes planting impossible. October is perhaps the most desirable time most years.

Include tulips in your foundation planting, flower border, or in front of shrubs.

## SOILS AND CARE

Tulips prefer a light well-drained soil. Like so many perennials they will not thrive in low, moist areas where water is likely to stand. On heavier soils such as in many parts of the Red River Valley, tulips can be grown successfully if good drainage is provided.

Spade the tulip bed 10 to 12 inches deep before the bulbs are planted. The average spading fork will work soil to this depth quite easily. Work leaf mold or well-rotted manure into the soil when the bed is spaded. Never use fresh manure of any kind.

Tulips are much more likely to live if covered with some sort of mulch as soon as the soil begins to freeze. Lawn clippings, clean straw, marsh hay or similar light material are satisfactory. Take off the mulch as soon as danger of hard spring frosts is past.

## RESETTING

In good locations you can leave tulips in



the ground for several years without resetting. Best results are not usually obtained in North Dakota, however, after the plants have been in the ground 2, or at the best, 3 years. Darwins, especially, need to be reset after two blooming seasons.

In resetting, dig the bulbs after the tops have died down. August is usually a good time to reset tulips in North Dakota. Lift the bulbs carefully with a spading fork. Sort out the small ones. These small bulbs can be lined out to "grow up" somewhere. Good bulbs should measure  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. If the larger bulbs appear weak, get rid of them and start with fresh ones. Healthy bulbs may be taken up, sorted, dried, and stored in a cool, dark place until planting time. If storing them isn't convenient, you can reset the bulbs immediately.

## VARIETIES

There are many tulip varieties. However, tulips are not ordinarily bought by varieties. More commonly, gardeners *buy mixed collections* by color from reliable nursery houses. Decide whether you want early, main season, or late bloom; or a combination of all three. Remember, different kinds of tulips have different blooming dates.

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