

BULB FORCING REMINDERS

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To produce quality tulips, hyacinths and other bulbs, growers should pay attention to details in their culture.

When bulbs are moved from the storage area into the greenhouse, three details in their culture should be followed to insure a first-quality plant. Hyacinths may spit if taken from very cold storage directly into warm greenhouse forcing areas, especially if frozen. Keep thawing temperatures low. Warm gradually when possible.

First, good watering practices should be observed. Plants should be watered in the morning, whenever possible. This is to allow foliage to dry. If two waterings are necessary, make the second application in early afternoon. This is to minimize disease promoting conditions on leaves and flowers.

Second, forcing temperatures are most important. Most bulbs can be forced between 55-65°F at night with the day temperature not exceeding 70°F. The following table gives the approximate number of days from the start of forcing to flower. It presupposes that the storage was proper so that early crops have adequate root development and that late crops have not grown excessively before the beginning of forcing.

As an example, tulips to be forced for Easter, April 15, at 60° nights will take 23 days if they are to be ready April 9. Forcing should begin March 17.

Flowering Date	Tulips			Daf.		Hyacinths			Crocus		
	55°	60°	65°	55°	60°	55°	60°	65°	55°	60°	
Days from start of forcing to flower											
Feb.	5	40	32	24	32	27	24	20	16	15	12
	15	38	30	23	27	23	21	17	14	12	10
	25	35	28	22	23	20	18	14	12	10	8
Mar.	5	33	27	21	10	17	15	12	10	8	7
	15	31	26	21	17	15	12	10	8	5	5
	25	29	25	21	15	13	10	9	7		
Apr.	5	27	24	21	13	12	8	7	6		
	15	25	22	20	12	11	7	6	5		

Third, the causes of disease should be minimized. Temperatures and ventilation should be watched closely. (Fans over plants to keep the air moving help reduce disease problems.) A protective fungicide should be applied at 7- to 10-day intervals to prevent the spread of Botrytis, a most serious problem in bulbs.

Fungicides available are (see label for registered crops):

Termil--smoke

Daconyl 2787 75% WP--1 1/2 lbs./100 gals.
1 1/2 tbsp./gal.

Captan 50% WP--2 lbs./100 gal.
2 tbsp./gal.

Ferbam 65 or 76% WP--2 lbs./100 gal.
2 tbsp./gal.

Benomyl--8 oz./100 gal.
2 tsp./gal.

While keeping these three factors in mind, losses during the forcing period can be minimized and quality plants produced.