

## "T" is for Tulip

Tulip is the common name for any member of a genus of spring-flowering, bulbous herbs, of the lily family. Native to Asia and the Mediterranean region, there are about 80 species and thousands of varieties. The plants are erect with long, broad, parallel-veined leaves and cup-shaped, solitary flowers borne at the tip of the stem. The flowers are either single or double and occur in a wide range of solid colors. Broken tulips, showing a flame pattern, are the result of a viral disease carried and transferred to the plants by aphids.

The Dutch brought the tulip to Europe from Constantinople in 1593. Specialists, who sold their product for very high prices controlled the growing of tulips until 1630. The trading in tulips then increased and in 1636 and 1637 'tulipomania' ruled the land. Bulbs became a type of currency with a daily fluctuating value which was quoted much as we quote stocks. Everyone wanted to become a bulb grower. One bulb of the Vice-Roi variety, sold for thirty-six bushels of wheat, seventy-two bushels of rice, four oxen, twelve sheep, eight pigs, two barrels of wine, four barrels of beer, two tons of butter, a thousand pounds of cheese, a bed, clothes, and a silver cup for a combined value of 2,500 Dutch guilders. There was no regulation of the tulip trade. Bulbs were sold faster than they could grow. Prices spiraled to ridiculous levels for bulbs whose flower had not been seen. The bulb growers finally asked the government to ban the trade. The market finally collapsed in 1637, similar to the stock market crash of the 20's. Overnight fortunes were lost, people committed suicide and the paper was sold off at rock bottom prices.

In the entire world, 43 tulip books from this period are known to exist. Each one is a manuscript made by a different illustrator. Of these books, 34 were made in the Netherlands during the first half of the seventeenth century. The tulip book of nurseryman P. Cos of Haarlem is a manuscript nursery catalogue of tulips and a small number of other flowers, published in 1637 and owned by the Wageningen UR Library. The book names each tulip, gives its weight and selling price. The two most expensive were sold for *f* 3,000 and *f* 4,200 or about 1.5 to 2 million dollars.

The growing of tulips is still an important Dutch industry. They are also grown commercially in Michigan, Washington and Oregon. The [Skagit Valley Tulip Festival](#) in Washington State is held in April each year. Closer to home, south of Portland Oregon, [Wooden Shoe Bulb Company](#) also hosts a festival in the spring. Need to see some tulips before spring? You can visit the [Wynyard Tulip Festival](#) from October 6th to 13th in Australia.

In the fall, plant your tulips 4-5 inches deep about 6 inches apart in full sun. Taller varieties should be planted 8 inches deep. They like a rich sandy alkaline soil with good drainage. There is a flat side on a tulip bulb. If you plant this facing outward, the largest leaf will face in that direction. Climate is crucial to the success of tulips. They require warm dry summers and cold winters. If your garden hosts squirrels, gophers, deer or rabbits, plant the bulbs in a wire cage.

When the plants are above ground and again a month later, fertilize the bed with two pounds of 5-5-5 or a similar fertilizer per 100 square feet. Seed production will take food away from the developing bulbs so remove old

flowers. Leave the leaves free until they wither and then cut them. Tulip bulbs form offsets that take a few years to reach blooming size. As the offset matures, it draws energy from the mother bulb, which then doesn't bloom. If you treat bulbs as annuals, you are guaranteed top-quality blooms each year. You also don't have to fertilize or look at the yellow leaves. When the flower is done, remove the bulb and put it on the compost pile.

If you cut the flowers, use a sharp knife and recut the stem under water to prevent the intake of air into the stem. Taking leaves will weaken the bulb. Unlike most flowers, tulips keep growing in the vase – sometimes as much as an inch or more after being arranged. Tulips will bend and twist as they "dance" in response to the effects of stem growth, gravity and sunlight. Keep them away from sources of heat – including direct sunlight, lamps, and television sets. Do not add daffodils to your bouquet. The daffodil exudes a substance into the water which will kill the tulip.

There are 15 major groups of tulips. They are classified according to their flower characteristics.

Example	Description	Flowering Season
	<p><b>Single early</b> – single-flowered with short stems</p>	Early
	<p><b>Double Early</b> – double flowers with short stems</p>	Early to mid

Example	Description	Flowering Season
 <p data-bbox="282 558 451 590">Triumph tulips</p>	<p data-bbox="599 195 971 260"><b>Triumph</b> – single-flowered with medium stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 195 1089 222">Mid</p>
 <p data-bbox="258 989 472 1020">'Red Riding Hood'</p>	<p data-bbox="599 621 1000 686"><b>Single late</b> – single-flowered with long stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 621 1097 648">Late</p>
 <p data-bbox="289 1314 444 1346">Darwin tulips</p>	<p data-bbox="599 1050 1013 1115"><b>Darwin</b> – single-flowered with long stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 1050 1089 1077">Mid</p>
 <p data-bbox="315 1724 418 1755">'Ballade'</p>	<p data-bbox="599 1377 976 1486"><b>Lily-flowered</b> – single flowered with pointed, curled-back petals and a varied stem length</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 1377 1192 1404">Mid and late</p>

Example	Description	Flowering Season
 <p data-bbox="293 558 440 583">Parrot tulips</p>	<p data-bbox="597 195 992 306"><b>Parrot</b> – single-flowered with fringed, curled and twisted petals and long stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1044 195 1101 220">Late</p>
 <p data-bbox="264 905 469 930">Rembrandt tulips</p>	<p data-bbox="597 621 1011 732"><b>Rembrandt</b> – flowers have broken colors caused by a virus infection with long stems.</p>	<p data-bbox="1044 621 1373 732">Not commercially available; displayed only in historical collections</p>
 <p data-bbox="313 1264 418 1289">'Toronto'</p>	<p data-bbox="597 968 997 1037"><b>Multiflowered</b> – three to seven flowers and variable length stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1044 968 1101 993">Late</p>
 <p data-bbox="293 1543 440 1568">'Blue Heron'</p>	<p data-bbox="597 1329 997 1440"><b>Fringed</b> – single-flowered, petals edged with crystalline fringes and variable length stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1044 1329 1195 1354">Mid and late</p>

Example	Description	Flowering Season
 <p data-bbox="272 569 461 600">Viridiflora tulips</p>	<p data-bbox="597 197 992 306"><b>Viridiflora</b> – single-flowered with some green on the petals and variable length stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 197 1101 222">Late</p>
 <p data-bbox="245 890 488 921">Kaufmanniana tulips</p>	<p data-bbox="597 632 1013 869"><b>Kaufmanniana</b> (botanical) – single-flowered with mottled foliage, a multicolored flower base that opens completely with a bright carmine blush on the exterior and short stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 632 1110 663">Early</p>
 <p data-bbox="256 1283 472 1314">'Madame Ledefer'</p>	<p data-bbox="597 947 1003 1142"><b>Fosteriana</b> (botanical) – large elongated single-flowers with very broad leaves that can be green, gray-green, mottled or striped and medium to long stems</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 947 1110 978">Early</p>
 <p data-bbox="289 1682 444 1713">Greigii tulips</p>	<p data-bbox="597 1346 971 1499"><b>Greigii</b> (botanical) – single-flowered with mottled or striped foliage that bends towards the ground</p>	<p data-bbox="1045 1346 1094 1377">Mid</p>
<p data-bbox="597 1745 1003 1814"><b>Other species</b> – all other species and cultivars and hybrids</p>		

## References

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