

Submitted to the Ruston Daily Leader on Friday, September 21, 2012  
To be run in the Tuesday, September 25, 2012 issue of the RDL

### Now is the time to plan for spring-flowering bulbs

Many of our local nurseries and garden centers already have spring-flowering bulbs for sale. Spring-flowering bulbs are those that generally bloom in our climate between late-January and late-April, depending on the variety. If you are interested in including additional spring color to your garden, consider purchasing some spring-flowering bulbs within the next few weeks. When selecting the bulbs at the local nursery or garden center, pick the largest bulbs that are firm with no obvious cuts, soft spots, or rot. Another option is to order from a catalog. If you opt for this route, place your order as soon as possible. After purchase, store the bulbs in a cool, dry location until you are ready to plant them.

The proper time to plant most bulbs is October and November, with two notable exceptions. Tulips and hyacinths require refrigeration to receive adequate cold chilling hours, which will help ensure proper blooming. After purchase, place the tulip and hyacinth bulbs in paper or net bags (well labeled) and place them in the vegetable bin of your refrigerator for six to eight weeks. Make sure the bulbs are not placed near apples or any other types of fruit while stored in the refrigerator. The tulip and hyacinth bulbs can then be planted in late December or early January, once the soil has had a chance to get cold.

When the time comes to plant the bulbs, pick a spot that has good drainage, part to full sun, and moderately fertile soil. Be sure to avoid low spots that tend to stay damp. If drainage is an issue, consider a raised bed or large containers. It is also important to plant the bulbs at the proper depth. A good rule of thumb is to plant bulbs at a depth equal to twice their height. Once the bulbs have been planted, you can plant low-growing, cool-season annuals, such as pansies, violas, and lobelia, in the same area.

Many of the spring-flowering bulbs available locally will only bloom reliably for their first year. These include tulips, hyacinth, crocus, ranunculus, and freesia. However, spring bulbs that tend to be reliably long-lived are also available and include: jonquils, larger-flowered daffodil varieties, amaryllis, Dutch iris, and Easter lily.

For more information about this or other topics contact Sara Rogers, Jackson Parish County Agent, with the LSU AgCenter at 259-5690 or [srogers@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:srogers@agcenter.lsu.edu).