

Apr 2020

REPTON GREEN FINGERS

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Link to video: <https://youtu.be/473RxFzO7ko>

SPRING BULBS - WHAT TO DO WHEN THEY ARE OVER

SMALL EARLY BULBS

Small early bulbs are never a problem to me, they just melt away, one day they are there and a week later they have gone. Bulbs like chinodoxia, scillas and crocus need six weeks to die back naturally,



SNOWDROPS

This year in February we bought quite a lot of special snowdrops so I will be following the advice below for them only- the common snowdrops don't need any help in our garden.

In September a feed of blood, fish and bone meal worked into the soil surface helps keep the bulb healthy and flowering well. In April a liquid feed of Phostrogen or tomato food gives the bulb an extra boost. In September a mulch of leaf mould can be put down.. I use grit /gravel as a mulch as it acts as a marker for where the bulbs are when they are dormant, helps conserve moisture and helps keep the flowers clean from the soil when flowering.

DAFFODILS

Daffodils benefit from deadheading, I find it quite therapeutic to go round the garden plucking off the heads. I find the early daffs like February Gold and Jetfire die back quite quickly but the later ones in flower now like Pipit and Avalanche seem determined to hang around till as late as August - it is worth planting them in an out of the way place.

I have noticed that the miniature potted daffodils like Topolino flower well in the first year and then don't flower again. I think the problem is that the pots they are planted in are too shallow, so I will be replanting some of these bulbs much deeper, The other problem is clumps of leaves and no flowers, this is because the bulbs have become overcrowded. You need to separate the bulbs and replant or just put in some new bulbs

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TULIPS

There are many different types of tulips and I like the variation in colour they introduce to the garden in late spring - a bit of red, purple and orange always spices things up a bit. Serious tulip growers always lift their bulbs and store them over the summer and replant the biggest ones the next year. That sound like a lot of work to me. We have quite a lot of species tulips which bulk up over the years and are really pretty but they don't have the stature of the larger tulips. The Darwin types seem to go on for us year on year but many other larger tulips seem to get virus and become ugly and twisted. Tulips should be deadheaded by cutting the stems as low as possible but leaving the leaves to die back naturally.



BLUEBELLS

I have never knowingly planted a single bluebell in the garden but there are loads of them. We used to throw bulbs over the hedge into the field at the end of the garden, and then we bought part of the field and despite being well ploughed they are still thriving. Bluebells are survivors, they tolerate the deep shade of deciduous trees but love a bit of sunshine too. English bluebells are lovely and not too invasive, Spanish bluebells are much more aggressive - watch the video to tell the difference. The great thing about bluebells is once flowering is over you can just cut away any foliage you don't want. Dig deeply to remove bulbs - I have cleared several areas but it takes time and patience.

Jobs to do in April in the garden

[HTTPS://WWW.RHS.ORG.UK/ADVICE/IN-MONTH/APRIL](https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/in-month/april)

If you want to keep a plant give some away