

## LAYERED-BULB CONTAINER SURPRISE



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### OBJECTIVE(S):

#### 1. Educational Components

Each participant will be provided information about the benefits of layering bulbs in order to have more plant varieties in one planter. They will also be informed of the planting depths required by various bulbs and the concept of 'bulb lasagna.' Some examples of each 'layer' (bulb) will be given.

#### 2. Activity

Participants will then select two bulb varieties and plant them in a pot that they can then decorate if so desired.

#### 3. Take Away

Participants will take a planter of two different types of bulbs with them to their room.

### MATERIALS:

(Plan for 8-10 patients. Eight is supposed to be the maximum, but sometimes we get 10.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Pens

\_\_\_\_\_ Markers

\_\_\_\_\_ Dishpans for dirt (available in BRI supply cabinet)

===== Watering cans (2 available in BRI supply cabinet) or individual watering bottles for patients to use

\_\_\_\_\_ Name tags for patients (check BRI supply cabinet)

\_\_\_\_\_ Example of completed project you're doing

## LAYERED BULB CONTAINER

### **MATERIALS:** *(Continued)*

\_\_\_\_\_ An extra set of patient project materials listed below in order for you to demonstrate the project

\_\_\_\_\_ TWO completed presentation forms (1 to BRI and 1 mailed to Ext. office)

\_\_\_\_\_ Your clean receipts for materials purchased (give to BRI therapists)

### **SPECIFIC ITEMS NEEDED for this project**

- Variety of bulbs: suggested are narcissi and allium; tulips; muscari and crocus
- Pots
- Plastic drain trays for pots, if needed
- Potting mix
- Seed starting medium or bone meal
- Gravel
- Water
- Decorations, optional

### **POWERPOINT OR PREZI OF PRESENTATION AVAILABLE?** No

**HANDOUTS:**     1) *“Basic Information for Container Gardening”*  
                      2) *“Layering Bulbs in a Container”*  
                      3) *“How to Set Up a Small Space Outdoor for a Lasagna Bulb Garden”*

### **BEFORE CLASS:**

If pots do not have drainage holes on the bottom, drill a few small holes.

### **DURING CLASS:**

1. Select the bulbs for each layer. Deepest/largest bulbs generally are first to go in the pot.
2. Determine number of bulbs that can be planted In general, the larger the bulb, the fewer that can be used. Place about 1 ½ apart and 1 ½-2 inches from the sides of the pot.
3. Cover the hole in the bottom and put in a layer of gravel.
4. Add potting soil
5. Place the bulbs and cover with sprinkle of bulb starter or bone meal.
6. Cover with more soil
7. Water just enough to settle the soil.
8. When the flowers wither, allow 6 weeks before cutting back as this is when the bulb is storing nutrients for next year. Otherwise, use as compost.

## LAYERED BULB CONTAINER

### MAINTENANCE:

Water when ground feels dry; probably weekly.

### INFORMATION/FACTS:

Growing bulbs in containers is a fantastic solution for gardeners with limited spaces, or for those who want to decorate their decks, patios, or front entryways with the beautiful colors and lovely fragrances of spring-blooming bulbs. Growing bulbs in containers is easy. Virtually any bulb can be grown in containers, and different types of bulbs can even be mixed together. In fact, it's a lot like growing bulbs in the ground. Start with a container with drainage holes so that excess water can escape, and plant your bulbs in the fall or very early spring. Most spring-blooming bulbs prefer well-drained soil and will rot and die if their feet are too wet for too long.

If you want to leave your bulbs outdoors all winter, select a large container that will hold enough soil to insulate the bulbs. In Arkansas, that means a container at least 14 inches in diameter.

Fill your container with a high-quality potting mix (don't use garden soil) and plant your bulbs as deeply as you would in the ground; for instance, 6 or 7 inches deep for tulips and daffodils, and 4 or 5 inches deep for little bulbs such as crocus and Siberian squill. Water your bulbs well after planting.

If you grow bulbs in a container that's too small to spend the winter outdoors, or one that is made from a material such as terra-cotta that needs protection, keep the planted bulbs someplace cold, such as a garage or shed. Don't bring your bulbs indoors; most basements will be too warm for them to develop properly.

To get dense and flowery spring pot displays, you have to try layering bulbs in what the Dutch call a bulb lasagna, layering them up one on top of another. The largest and latest flowering bulbs go in deepest, moving to the smallest and earliest in the top layer. The emergent shoots of the lower layer bulbs just bend round anything they hit sitting over their heads and keep on growing.

Done like this, you need to plant the bulbs slightly further apart than you would in a pot with a single layer so 1 to 1 1/2 inches apart is the right sort of spacing. The first layer can go as deep as 11-12 inches deep. Then cover them over with a couple of inches of potting compost before you place the next layer of bulbs.

One of the most popular combinations consists of:

- Bottom Layer: [Tulips](#)
- Mid-Layer: [Daffodils](#)
- Top Layer: [Grape Hyacinth](#)

If you want two layers, you must have a container that is at least ten inches deep. If you want three layers, about fifteen inches will do. The general rule of thumb is to provide five inches of soil for each layer of bulbs.

## LAYERED BULB CONTAINER

### SOURCES:

Better Homes and Gardens. (n.d.). How to grow bulbs in containers. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from <https://www.bhg.com/gardening/flowers/bulbs/how-to-grow-bulbs-in-containers/>

Old House Gardens. (n.d.). Bulbs in Pots: From America's expert source for heirloom flower bulbs. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from <https://oldhousegardens.com/BulbsInPots>

Plant Care Today. (n.d.). Layering bulbs: Growing with the lasagna bulb method. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from <https://plantcaretoday.com/layering-bulbs-in-the-garden.html>

Raven. S. (2016, October 19). Layering bulbs - how to make a bulb lasagna. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from [https://www.sarahraven.com/articles/layering\\_bulbs\\_-\\_how\\_to\\_make\\_a\\_bulb\\_lasagne.htm](https://www.sarahraven.com/articles/layering_bulbs_-_how_to_make_a_bulb_lasagne.htm)

Russell-Evans, M. (n.d.). Container basics.

## Basic Information For Container Gardening



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### I. Choose your location

- Assess your light situation. Decide if it is shade or sunny; morning, afternoon, dappled, or reflected light.
- Will the container be a permanent fixture? Size is important if it has to be moved.

### II. Choose your container

- Does it need to be portable? To bring in houseplants that need to overwinter or to move color around as needed.
- Container size. Be sure the container is large enough for the plant(s) used; also, that way the plants will not dry out too quickly. Generally, you'll want to match the size of the pot to the size of the flowers. Reserve small pots for crocus and muscari, midsize for hyacinths, and larger pots for tulips and daffodils.
- Be sure your container fits in with the size of the area and the style of other decorative items.
- Drainage—be sure the container has adequate drainage holes. Or use a liner/pot inside your decorative pot that can be lifted out of the water to drain.

### **III. Planting the container**

- Soil - be sure the soil is suitable for the plant you are using. For example, in a hot, sunny area with lots of reflected light, you may want to use a heavier peat mix. This will help retain moisture a bit longer. Also consider using polymer crystals. (Note-follow instructions to the letter)
- Chose plants that have common light and moisture requirements.
- Consider time of year. Plan on repeating 3-4 times/year following the seasons.
- Determine number of plants needed. Do you need instant gratification or can you wait knowing the ultimate size the plants will reach?
- Check the planting depth instructions on the package. Bulbs in pots can be planted more shallowly than bulbs the garden, but using the recommended depth will help the flowers stand tall. Be sure to allow at least 2" under the bulbs for root growth. Position the bulbs closely together – no more than an inch apart. Tulips look best when the bulbs are planted with the flat side facing out.

### **IV. Design**

- Use different types of plants. For example—tropical, annuals, and herbs mixed together.
- Notice foliage - texture is as important as flower or color.
- Use different shaped foliage plants. For example- tall cannas, spiked iris.
- Use different shaped flowers. For example- use spiked flowers like snapdragons, and a trailing flowering plant like verbena to soften.
- Remember different colored foliage plants can be as effective as flower color. For example- canna Pretoria, coleus, or croton.
- Consider mixing foliage plants for interest, texture, color, and to conserve space indoors.
- Focal point- does the container need to serve as a focal point or merely as background? Is it the only thing sitting by your front door? Either way, make sure it is always full and fresh.

**V. Hanging baskets**

- Chose basket – plastic or wire.
- Chose basket liner - sphagnum or cocoliner. Sphagnum holds moisture better and it is easier to side plant. Sphagnum can also be used to mulch the top of the basket to help hold moisture longer and keep soil from washing out when watering. Wrap plants in sphagnum to transplant. Sphagnum helps to anchor plants in the sides of strawberry pots.
- In the air - remember that the wind can dry plants as quickly as temperature. Plants hanging in the air are susceptible to drying quicker than plants on the ground.
- Moisture. Re-read #3 above. Check moisture often by inserting your finger into the soil.

**VI. Water Gardens**

- Can be done in any container that holds water.
- Be sure to choose plants suitable for the size container you are using.
- 50% coverage of the water surface will keep the water clear.
- If mosquitoes become a problem, use Mosquito Dunks. They are safe for fish, birds, etc.
- Water plants come as either topical or as hardy perennials.

**VII. Perennials in Container**

- As a rule, perennials are not good container plants. Annuals that bloom for long periods are visually a better choice.
- If you use perennials, chose one with a long bloom period with interesting foliage. Example-trailing verbena, cannas, hostas, ferns, and ivies.
- Conifers are great for height, texture, and evergreen interest. Most require full sun. Good drainage is a must. If you plant under conifers in containers, use plants that are more drought tolerant.

*Note:* Adapted from Mary Russell-Evans, (n.d.). Container basics.

## Layering Bulbs in a Container



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Even if you have a space as small as two-feet square, you can dig deep, layer your bulbs and enjoy a brilliant display of blooms come spring. In fact, you can have blossoms throughout the summer months and into the autumn if you plan it right. The key to limited space bulb layering lies in careful bulb selection. Remember that even though your square footage on the surface of the ground may be limited, you can dig as deeply as you like. Consider setting up four layers (bottom to top) of bulbs with the following choices:

- Layer #1 – Very tall Lilies such as Orientals, Asiatics and/or Trumpets will bloom last.
- Layer #2 – Medium height Narcissus and/or Allium will bloom third.
- Layer #3 – Shorter Tulips will bloom second.
- Layer #4 – Very small Crocus, Grape Hyacinth, Iris reticulata and/or Scilla will bloom first.
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While this combination is ideal for very small beds, it can also be used for large areas if you wish. You can add variety by making different selections from the four categories for different areas in your yard or garden.

### SOURCE:

Plant Care Today. (n.d.). Layering bulbs: Growing with the lasagna bulb method. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from <https://plantcaretoday.com/layering-bulbs-in-the-garden.html>

## How To Set Up A Small Space Outdoors for a Lasagna Bulb Garden



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1. In the autumn, find a bare spot with plenty of sun that gives you a couple of square feet of ground space.
2. Dig a hole that is about 20 inches deep.
3. Sift the native soil (or pick through it by hand) to remove rocks and roots.
4. Mix the native soil with an equal part of good compost.
5. Line the bottom of your hole with about three inches of coarse gardening sand for drainage.
6. Add two or three inches of your soil mixture.
7. Plant your bulbs as described above with the largest and latest blooming on the bottom layer and the smallest and soonest blooming on the top layer.
8. Finish it off with three or four inches of compost and some mulch or some winter plants.

### How Many Bulbs Should Be Purchased For A Container Or Small Space Garden?

Remember that close planting equals more blooms in this type of gardening; however, if you plant bulbs such as Narcissus very closely you will need to dig them up and divide them within a year or so.

If you have a planter or growing space that is a couple of feet square, it can generally support:

- Half a dozen Lily bulbs
- Half a dozen Daffodils or four Alliums
- Up to eight tulips
- A couple of dozen smaller bulbs

Note that on the Daffodils and Alliums, you can mix and match judiciously. For example, you might plant four Daffodil bulbs and two Alliums.

### SOURCE:

Plant Care Today. (n.d.). Layering bulbs: Growing with the lasagna bulb method. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from <https://plantcaretoday.com/layering-bulbs-in-the-garden.html>