



Netherlands Bulb Company
Plant Happiness

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Key Points to Keep in Mind When Helping and Guiding Tulip Forcers to Success

Storing tulip bulbs before planting:

1. Regular bulbs store at 70°F with ventilation, no fans (fans will dry out bulbs and cause all kinds of diseases).
2. Pre-cooled bulbs 5°C or 9°C, store at the same temperature inside a cooler that can hold those temperatures. No fans.

Soil preparations:

1. Light airy artificial mix with 20% sand with a PH between 5.5 and 6.5. Higher than 6.5 will only promote more excessive root growth. We don't want that because that will cause all other kinds of diseases.

Planting:

1. If you are planting regular bulbs, plant in moist growing medium, water in and let excess water drip out, and place in a 40°F cooler right away. Do not wait longer than 4 hours.
2. If you are planting pre-cooled bulbs, make sure soil temperature is not above 50°F. Place planted tulips in the cooler at 5°C right away.
3. Tulip bulbs should be planted with ¼" of the nose above the soil line. Planting forcing tulip bulbs deep in the soil is never a good idea.
4. Water tulip bulbs in, not too wet and not too dry. A good rule of thumb, take a handful of your growing mix and squeeze it very hard by making a fist. Only 3-4 drops, holding your fist vertically should come out. If it is less you need to add more water to your mix, and if it's greater than 4 drops back off on the water content.

Inside the cooler:

1. Run your cooler at 40°F for the longest time possible until your tulip sprouts are 1-2" tall. Then lower temperature to 31-32°F. This will stop them from advancing, and your required number cold weeks will continue to accumulate. Keep floor wet to maintain relative humidity of above 90%. You should not have to water inside the cooler.
2. Avoid excessive rooting. Roots should not be stacked on top of each other in your crates or pots. At all times soil should be visible between the roots.
3. Excessive rooting depletes oxygen levels from the soil and will cause many problems like Botrytis Cinerea (grey mold) in the cooler.

Forcing in the greenhouse:

1. Take the trays out of the cooler on cloudy overcast days.
2. Water them in. You can add some calcium nitrate 200 ppm.
3. Relative humidity in the greenhouse should be below 80%, if not you can get stem topple, cracked leaf foliage.
4. Yes, this means that you may have to heat the greenhouse with a cracked window or roof open in the middle of winter January-March.
5. Avoid overwatering since this will only add to the relative humidity in the greenhouse.
6. Place crates on benches or any other product to keep the roots off the ground. You never know what has been growing there before.
7. Tulips like cold feet. Heat from above, no bottom heat to avoid Trichoderma. Don't cook the roots.
8. Keep soil level moist, not wet or soggy wet.
9. Water in the morning on sunny days so the foliage can dry during the day, to avoid botrytis.