WildaHome

Autumn Planting Wildflower Bulbs

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS & CARE GUIDE

Native and naturalised bulbs for woodland, meadow, orchard, lawn and garden. How to store, plant and look after them so they come back stronger every year.



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When your bulbs arrive

- **Open the box straight away.** Take the bulbs out of any plastic and keep them in their paper or net bags so air can move around them.
- **Store them cool, dry and airy** – a shed or garage is ideal – out of the sun, away from frost and safe from mice and squirrels.
- **Plant within days, not weeks.** Native woodland bulbs have thin or no skins and dry out quickly. Plant these first: bluebell, wood anemone, winter aconite, snowdrops, snake's head fritillary, wild garlic and lily of the valley.
- **Soak before planting:** winter aconite tubers and wood anemone rhizomes in tepid water for 3–4 hours (or overnight) to rehydrate them.
- **Can't plant yet?** If the ground is frozen or waterlogged, pot them up in trays of gritty compost and plant out as soon as conditions allow.

Bulbs
Daffodils, snowdrops, bluebell, tulip and most others. Pointed tip up, flat base down.

Tubers
Winter aconite and wild cyclamen. Knobbly and hard to read – see the species notes.

Rhizomes
Wood anemone. Thin brown sections of root – lay them flat, just under the surface.

Pips
Lily of the valley. A crown with roots attached – tip just below the soil, roots spread out.

How to plant

1. **Match the bulb to the place.** Shade or sun, damp or dry – page 4 shows which bulbs suit which site.
2. **Clear the competition.** Weed beds and borders. In grass, cut short and rake off before you plant.
3. **Plant at the right depth.** Use the depth guide on page 3. As a rule of thumb, cover each bulb with two to three times its own height of soil.
4. **Right way up.** Pointed tip up. If you can't tell, plant it on its side – the shoot will find its own way.
5. **Plant in natural drifts.** Scatter a handful gently and plant each one where it lands. Avoid rows and evenly spaced grids.
6. **Planting into turf?** Use a bulb planter, or cut an H in the turf with a spade, fold back the flaps, plant and firm them back down.

The Wildahome way: no feed

Native bulbs grow best in poor, undisturbed soil. Don't add compost, manure or fertiliser in grass, meadow or woodland – feeding only helps grass and weeds crowd your bulbs out. On heavy clay, a handful of grit under bulbs that dislike the wet (daffodils, wild tulip, grape hyacinth, star of Bethlehem) is all they need.

Planting depth guide

Depth is measured from the soil surface to the base of the bulb. Go to the deeper end on light, sandy soil and the shallower end on heavy clay. Listed in flowering order.

Bulb	Supplied as	Plant	Depth	Spacing	Flowers	Status
Winter Aconite *Eranthis hyemalis*	Dry tubers	Sep–Nov	**5cm**	5–10cm	Jan–Feb	Non-native
Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**5–8cm**	5–10cm	Jan–Mar	Naturalised
Giant Snowdrop *Galanthus elwesii*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Dec	**10cm**	5cm	Jan–Feb	Non-native
Double Snowdrop *G. nivalis f. pleniflorus*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Dec	**10cm**	5cm	Jan–Mar	Naturalised
Woronow's Snowdrop *Galanthus woronowii*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Dec	**10cm**	5cm	Jan–Mar	Non-native
Tenby Daffodil *Narcissus obvallaris*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**8–10cm**	10–15cm	Mar–Apr	UK native
Wild Daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**8–10cm**	10–15cm	Mar–Apr	UK native
Wild Tulip *Tulipa sylvestris*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Dec	**10–15cm**	10–15cm	Mar–Apr	Naturalised
Grape Hyacinth *Muscari neglectum*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**5cm**	5cm	Mar–Apr	Non-native
Summer Snowflake *Leucojum aestivum*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**10–15cm**	10–15cm	Mar–May	UK native
Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*	Rhizomes	Sep–Nov	**5cm**	5–10cm	Apr–May	UK native
Snake's Head Fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**10–15cm**	20–25cm	Apr–May	Debated
Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*	Bulbs	Sep–Nov	**5–8cm**	10cm	Apr–Jun	UK native
Wild Garlic (Ramsons) *Allium ursinum*	Bulbs	Sep–Nov	**3–5cm**	10cm	Apr–Jun	UK native
Star of Bethlehem *Ornithogalum umbellatum*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**10–15cm**	10–15cm	Apr–Jun	Non-native
Nodding Star of Bethlehem *Ornithogalum nutans*	Dry bulbs	Sep–Nov	**10–15cm**	10–15cm	May–Jun	Non-native
Lily of the Valley *Convallaria majalis*	Pips	Sep–Nov	**2–3cm**	10–15cm	May–Jun	UK native
Wild Cyclamen *Cyclamen hederifolium*	Dormant tubers	Aug–Oct	**2–5cm**	10–15cm	Aug–Oct	Non-native

Status: UK native – part of our wild flora. Debated – long present, origin disputed. Naturalised – introduced centuries ago and now growing wild. Non-native – a garden plant; keep it away from semi-natural habitats (see page 8).

Flowering calendar

Mix early, mid and late species and the same patch of ground carries flowers from January through to June – then the cyclamen take over in late summer.



Where to plant

Damp or dappled shade under deciduous trees

Bluebell, wild garlic, wood anemone, snowdrop, winter aconite, lily of the valley

Dry shade under trees and hedges

Wild cyclamen, giant snowdrop, winter aconite (on lighter soils)

Moist grassland, orchards and meadow edges

Wild daffodil, snake's head fritillary, nodding star of Bethlehem, snowdrop

Sunny, free-draining ground and thin soils

Tenby daffodil, wild tulip, grape hyacinth, star of Bethlehem

Wet ground, pond and stream margins

Summer snowflake, snake's head fritillary

Native-only habitat restoration

Bluebell, wild daffodil, Tenby daffodil, wood anemone, wild garlic, summer snowflake, lily of the valley

Species notes: January to April



Winter Aconite

Eranthis hyemalis

Non-native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	5cm	5–10cm	Jan–Feb

Soak the tubers for 3–4 hours before planting. Top and bottom are hard to tell apart, so plant them on their side. Best under deciduous trees on moist, humus-rich or chalky soil, where the yellow flowers carpet the ground in January. Patchy in year one; it builds up by seed.



Snowdrop

Galanthus nivalis

Naturalised

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	5–8cm	5–10cm	Jan–Mar

Plant in clumps of ten or more in moist, humus-rich soil in part shade – woodland edges, hedge banks and lawn corners. Dry bulbs can be slow to settle, so expect a modest first year. Lift and divide congested clumps just after flowering, while still in leaf.



Giant Snowdrop

Galanthus elwesii

Non-native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Dec	10cm	5cm	Jan–Feb

A larger, honey-scented snowdrop with broad grey-green leaves that usually flowers in its first season. Copes with drier ground and more sun than the common snowdrop. A garden plant: use it in lawns, borders and shrubberies rather than native woodland.



Double Snowdrop

Galanthus nivalis f. pleniflorus

Naturalised

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Dec	10cm	5cm	Jan–Mar

A long-grown double form of the common snowdrop with layered white petals. Moist, humus-rich soil in part shade, or full shade under a summer canopy. It sets no seed and spreads by offsets, so plant in generous groups.



Woronow's Snowdrop

Galanthus woronowii

Non-native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Dec	10cm	5cm	Jan–Mar

Sometimes sold as the green snowdrop, with glossy bright-green leaves under small white flowers. Moist but well-drained soil in sun or part shade. A garden snowdrop for borders and lawn edges rather than wild woodland.



Tenby Daffodil

Narcissus obvallaris

UK native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	8–10cm	10–15cm	Mar–Apr

The Welsh daffodil: compact, all-yellow and tough. Thrives on thin, stony or sloping ground in sun or light shade but dislikes waterlogging. Let the leaves die down naturally and leave grass uncut for at least six weeks after flowering.

Species notes: March to May



Wild Daffodil

Narcissus pseudonarcissus

UK native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	8–10cm	10–15cm	Mar–Apr

The Lent lily – pale petals around a golden trumpet. Ideal for meadows, orchards, hedgerow margins and open woodland in moisture-retentive soil. Plant in loose drifts and leave grass uncut until the leaves have yellowed, usually late June.



Wild Tulip

Tulipa sylvestris

Naturalised

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Dec	10–15cm	10–15cm	Mar–Apr

Britain's only wild tulip, with slender, scented yellow flowers. Needs sun and free-draining soil – add grit on heavy ground. Plant late (October to November) and deep. It can be shy to flower until settled. In grass, delay cutting until the leaves die back.



Grape Hyacinth

Muscari neglectum

Non-native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	5cm	5cm	Mar–Apr

Dense spikes of blue-black flowers rimmed with white. Plant shallow in open, sunny, free-draining ground – banks, gravel and short grass. Spreads freely by offsets and seed, so plant it where spreading is welcome.



Summer Snowflake

Leucojum aestivum

UK native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	10–15cm	10–15cm	Mar–May

Also called the Loddon lily. Tall stems of white, green-tipped bells for reliably moist or wet ground – pond edges, stream banks and damp hollows. Despite the name it flowers in spring. Once planted, leave it undisturbed.



Wood Anemone

Anemone nemorosa

UK native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	5cm	5–10cm	Apr–May

Soak the rhizomes for a few hours, then lay them flat. Plant promptly, as they dry out quickly. Dappled shade in leafy woodland soil. Growth is sparse in year one; it spreads slowly and can take several years to form a carpet.



Snake's Head Fritillary

Fritillaria meleagris

Native status debated

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	10–15cm	20–25cm	Apr–May

Chequered purple and white bells for damp grass and meadows. Plant as early as you can, as the bulbs dry out, and set them on their side in heavy soil. Scatter and plant where they fall. Leave grass uncut until seed has set, usually late June to July.

Species notes: April onwards



Bluebell

Hyacinthoides non-scripta

UK native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	5–8cm	10cm	Apr–Jun

Our native bluebell: scented violet-blue bells hanging from one side of a drooping stem. Plant promptly in dappled shade and moist, leafy soil. Expect few flowers in year one. Never plant near Spanish or hybrid bluebells, which cross with natives.



Wild Garlic (Ramsons)

Allium ursinum

UK native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	3–5cm	10cm	Apr–Jun

Carpets of white starry flowers in damp shade under deciduous trees, dying back by midsummer. Vigorous – plant it where it can spread. The leaves are edible in spring: pick lightly and only from a patch you know, as lily of the valley leaves look similar and are poisonous.



Star of Bethlehem

Ornithogalum umbellatum

Non-native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	10–15cm	10–15cm	Apr–Jun

White star flowers with green-striped backs that open in sunshine. Easy in sun on free-draining soil and spreads by offsets and seed. Poisonous to grazing animals, so don't plant it in or beside pasture or hay meadows.



Nodding Star of Bethlehem

Ornithogalum nutans

Non-native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	10–15cm	10–15cm	May–Jun

One-sided spikes of drooping, silvery-white bells. Naturalises in grass and light shade. In grass, leave it uncut until the foliage dies back in early summer. Like its relative, keep it away from grazing livestock.



Lily of the Valley

Convallaria majalis

UK native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Sep–Nov	2–3cm	10–15cm	May–Jun

Plant the pips with the bud just below the surface and the roots spread out. Forms fragrant carpets in damp shade but can take a year or two to settle; water in the first spring if dry. All parts are highly poisonous – keep it away from play areas, pets and livestock.



Wild Cyclamen

Cyclamen hederifolium

Non-native

PLANT	DEPTH	APART	FLOWERS
Aug–Oct	2–5cm	10–15cm	Aug–Oct

Plant as soon as the tubers arrive. Set them rounded side down, flatter side up, just covered with soil. Dry shade under trees suits it best. Pink flowers from late summer, followed by silver-marbled leaves that last through winter.

Aftercare through the year

Autumn (Sep–Dec)	Plant. Cut grass short first, firm the soil after planting and mark where things went so you don't dig them up by mistake.
Winter (Jan–Feb)	Aconites and snowdrops flower. Keep off planted ground when frozen or sodden. Divide crowded snowdrop clumps just after flowering.
Spring (Mar–May)	Daffodils, fritillaries, anemones and bluebells. Don't mow, tie up or cut back leaves – they feed the bulb for next year.
Summer (Jun–Aug)	Once leaves have yellowed and seed has dropped (late June to July), make the first cut in grass and remove the cuttings. Plant wild cyclamen from August.
Years 1–3	Expect a modest first spring, especially from dry snowdrops, bluebells and anemones. Native bulbs build up by seed and offsets over two to three years.

Do this

- ✓ Plant as soon as bulbs arrive
- ✓ Plant in loose, natural drifts
- ✓ Let foliage die back on its own
- ✓ Cut grass late and remove cuttings
- ✓ Be patient – give it three seasons

Avoid this

- × Leaving bulbs in the box for weeks
- × Feeding, composting or fertilising
- × Mowing before the leaves yellow
- × Planting in straight rows
- × Waterlogged ground (except snowflake and fritillary)

Safety and responsible planting

Bulbs are not food. Daffodil, bluebell, lily of the valley and star of Bethlehem are poisonous to people, pets and livestock. Wear gloves – daffodil sap irritates skin. Keep bulbs away from children and dogs.

Wild garlic or lily of the valley? Their leaves look alike. Only pick garlic from a patch you planted and know, and never plant the two together.

Keep the wild, wild. Plant non-native and naturalised species in gardens and amenity ground, not in or next to ancient woodland or protected sites. Never dig bulbs from the wild.

Questions about your bulbs?

We're happy to help with planting plans, larger schemes and site advice. Prefer to plant in spring? Ask about our bulbs in the green, delivered January to April.

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