



## CROCUS

The first crocus may actually poke up through snow just when you thought spring would never come. They are the earliest bulbs to arrive, with low-growing cuplike flowers and slender green foliage. The flowers can be blue, yellow, white, purple; some kinds are striped. They are easy to grow and care for and will return the following spring.

### Planting

Crocuses are most effective when planted in full sun or light shade, under deciduous trees, and in clusters or large drifts. They will grow in rocky spots or in the lawn. Plant them as soon as the soil cools in fall, as bulbs do not store well.

Prepare a bed by loosening soil to a depth of several inches and mixing in compost. Set the bulbs about 3 to 4 inches deep, pointed end up, and 3 or 4 inches apart. Water the bed thoroughly after planting, and water during dry spells in the fall. Mulch lightly, or not at all. To plant them in turf, lift a section of grass and loosen the soil underneath.

### Crocus in the Lawn

Small, early-blooming species crocus, such as *Crocus tommasinianus*, are best if you want crocus growing as if scattered here and there in a grassy area. Choose a shaded, not too dense patch of lawn for this, and set the mower high enough so that foliage can mature after blooming is over. Squirrels do not seem to find crocus bulbs as easily when planted this way.

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