**Dahlias**

Ground temperature should reach 60°F. Wait until all danger of spring frost is past before planting. (We plant them a little after the tomato plants go in.) Select a planting site with full sun. Dahlias grow more blooms with 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight. They love the morning sunlight best. Choose a location with a bit of protection from the wind. Bedding dahlias can be planted 9 to 12 inches apart. The smaller flowering types, which are usually about 3 feet tall, should be spaced 2 feet apart. The taller, larger-flowered dahlias should be spaced 3 feet apart. If you plant dahlias about 1 foot apart, they make a nice flowering hedge and will support each other. The planting hole should be slightly larger than the root ball of the plant and incorporate some compost or sphagnum peat moss into the soil. Dig a hole that’s about 6 to 8 inches deep. Set the tubers into it, with the growing points, or “eyes,” facing up, and cover with 2 to 3 inches of soil (some say 1 inch is adequate). As the stem sprouts, fill in with soil until it is at ground level. Tall, large-flowered cultivars will require support. Place stakes (five to six feet tall) around plants at planting time and tie stems to them as the plants grow. Large dahlias and those grown solely for cut flowers are best grown in a dedicated plot in rows on their own, free from competition from other plants. Dahlias of medium to low height mix well with other summer flowers. Medium to dwarf-size dahlias will do well in containers. Dahlias start blooming about 8 weeks after planting, starting in mid-July. Some gardeners start tubers indoors in containers a month ahead to get a jump on the season. Do not water the tubers right after planting; this encourages rot. Wait until the sprouts have appeared above the soil to water. Do not bother mulching the plants. The mulch harbors slugs and dahlias like the sun on their roots.

**Lilies**

Select a site with soil that drains well. Lilies need lots of sun. For dependable blooms, lilies need 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight a day. Loosen the soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches. The deep planting encourages the developing stem to send out roots to help stabilize the plant and perhaps eliminate the need for staking. Also, deep planting keeps lily bulbs cool when temperatures soar. Enrich the soil with leaf mold or well-rotted organic matter to encourage good drainage. Plant the bulbs 3 times as deep as the height of the bulb and set the bulb in the hole pointy side up. Fill the hole with soil. Space bulbs at a distance equal to three times the bulb’s diameter (usually about 8 to 18 inches apart, depending on the variety). For a good effect, plant lilies in groups of 3 to 5 bulbs. Water thoroughly.

**Gladiolus**

Plant gladiolus corms in the spring once the danger of frost has passed and the soil has warmed. Gladioli like well-drained soil and full sun. Ready your garden by using a garden fork or tiller to loosen the soil to about 12 to 15 inches deep. After loosening the soil, mix in a 2- to 4-inch layer of compost or aged manure. Set the corm in the hole about 4 inches deep with the pointed end facing up. Cover with soil and press firmly. Space the corms 6 to 8 inches apart. Water the corms thoroughly. If you’re planting tall varieties, be sure to stake them at planting time. Be careful not to damage the corms with the stakes. It takes about 90 days from the time gladioli are planted for the corms to root, grow, bloom.

**Tree Lily**

It is critical to choose a planting location that has well drained soil and receives full to part sun. Space the bulbs of a tree lily at the same distance as you would a typical lily bulb, approx. 8-12" apart. Tree lily bulbs will look much like those of a typical lily but larger. The pointed end should face upwards in a hole approximately 10-12" deep. Thoroughly soak the area with water once all the bulbs have been planted. Water as needed while the plant is growing and blooming. After the flowers have died, allow the remaining foliage to yellow and die back. The leaves will continue to gather sunlight and make food for next year's blooms. Once the foliage has yellowed and dried, it may be removed by gently pulling it out of the soil. If the leaves do not easily pull away from the bulb, they are not ready to be removed. After the foliage has been removed, your tree lily bulbs will be dormant and ready to "rest" until next year!