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how to plant and grow freesias

Posted in All Gardening Advice, Bulbs, January, February, March, April, May, June, July on 1st March 2021

Tips and tricks for successful planting and cultivation of this beautiful plant with a gorgeous fragrant flower. Find out when is best to plant [freesias](#), how to plant freesia bulbs in a pot and ways to care for your freesia plant throughout the year.

Freesias are gorgeous and delicate exotics from the other side of the world – they grow wild in the Cape Province of South Africa – so we tend to think that growing them here will be difficult, but this simply isn't true.

If you want to grow your own look for [prepared corms](#) rather than so-called 'garden varieties'. Prepared means that the freesia bulbs (corms) have been subjected to a dormancy-breaking heat treatment – an average of 12 weeks at 30C. The idea behind this is to mimic the conditions in South Africa. There they dry out and become dormant in the hot summer, only beginning to grow in the warm, moist autumn. They then have a cool patch in winter, which initiates flower-bud formation. These are the types of corms we sell at Sarah Raven.

PLANTING

Soil and Site

Well-drained spot, in sun or light shade. Add plenty of organic matter to improve thin soils.

Spacing

Plant them 5cm deep and 5-8 cm apart. The bulbs look like small, slim onions. Plant them with the pointed end facing up.

In the garden

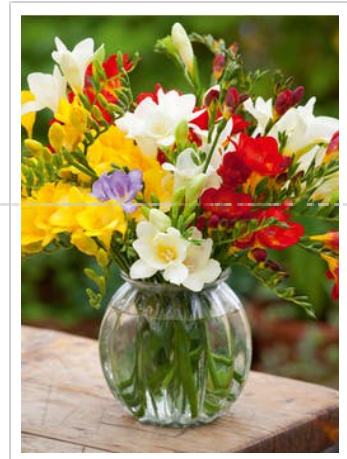
Our prepared freesia corms can be planted in autumn for flowering inside from January to April or from March (in a greenhouse) or April-July (outside). I have gone on planting outside until July for flowers almost up until Christmas. Plant the corms straight into the ground in a well-drained spot in sun or light shade. I grew some very successfully last summer and autumn in a west-facing bed against a hedge.

When the plants are up and growing, they will benefit from a potash-rich feed – [comfrey juice](#) or something you would use for [tomatoes](#) (see our website for details).

For containers

Plant six bulbs, pointy end upwards (again at 1-2 in deep) in a 13cm/5in pot, or spaced at that equivalent in a larger pot. They like a rich, loam-based compost (which I expect explains why they do well on my heavy soil) with a little extra [grit](#) added for drainage. Go for about two thirds compost, one third grit.

Water regularly and keep them moist and shaded at all times – a cold greenhouse or conservatory is ideal. Once the corms start to sprout, move the pots into full sunlight and [keep watering](#). When the buds show colour, you can bring them indoors. If they have been planted in good soil or compost they will not require feeding.



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AFTERCARE

If planted in good soil or compost, they will not require feeding. Flowering takes around 100-120 days from planting.

Both in the garden and in pots, they will need support to keep the foliage and flowering stems upright as they grow. In pots you can use special round [supports](#), which are held on a central cane, but a triangle or square of canes would do the job just as well. In the garden, use twiggy end branches of silver birch or hazel.

Freesias are not fully hardy, so you are usually recommended to lift the plants in the autumn, either when the leaves yellow, or after the first frost. Cut the stems back to 1in and allow the corms to dry. Remove the old, shrivelled portion, keeping only the new plump corms. These store easily in coir, dry potting compost or sand. Keep them in a cool, dry, frost-free place. Plant again, when the ground begins to warm in late April. Stagger plantings to extend the flowering season.

Cut Flowers

The yellows, blues and whites have a longer vase-life than the reds and pinks, with some lasting 3 weeks when cut in bud. Either bought or home-made, flower food is worth it with freesias. Use one teaspoon of thick bleach and two of a thick sugar syrup to 1 litre of water, or two small flower food sachets. This extends the vase life by as much as 20%, helps the buds to develop and is said to enhance scent.

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