FAQ’s for Holland in Bloom
Annual Tulip Dig - 2019

Holland In Bloom wants to see your tulips bloom next spring!
After all the hard work you’re doing to plant the bulbs at home, we hope to see photos of your tulips in bloom next year! Simply email your photos of your tulips to hollandinbloom@cityofholland.com.

1. If the tulips look dead, are they?
   Answer: The stems and leaves may look be brown or look dead, and they may in fact be dead, but the bulbs are still alive and lying dormant until next spring. Leaving the stems on until they turn brown gives the tulips sufficient time to store energy in the bulb.

2. Are there other areas that I can dig up the tulip bulbs? Can I come another day?
   Answer: No, you may only dig at Centennial Park, Window on the Waterfront, and the designated fields at Windmill Island Gardens. You are only allowed to dig on June 1 and between the times of 9 to 11:30 am. It is extremely important for the Parks Division staff who will handle the summer plantings in the park that the digging is supervised and restricted to only one date and time.

3. What do I do when I arrive at Centennial Park, Window on the Waterfront, or Windmill Island Gardens?
   Answer: Check in (email address), pay, receive a tag for your bucket(s), pick up instructions, and off you go to dig! We’ll have over 200,000 tulips to dig between the three locations, with the smallest quantity at Centennial Park.

4. Is there a map available to see what color/variety tulip is planted?
   Answer: Yes, maps will be posted on the website and will also be available for review the date of the dig. Visit www.hollandinbloom.com or our Holland in Bloom Facebook Event page. There is also signage on each tulip bed.

5. How many tulips will fit in my 5-gallon bucket?
   Answer: You should be able to fit 50–60 bulbs in your 5-gallon bucket, while keeping the leaves and stems attached to the bulbs until they wilt and turn brown. Then follow the steps in #7 below to create the best possible opportunity for your bulbs to grow and bloom next spring. If you choose to take off the leaves and stems (not recommended), please dispose of them properly.

6. Is there a specific technique to digging up the tulips? What if I don’t have a pitchfork?
   Answer: You’ll want to start digging deep enough (approximately 8” down) and loosening the soil around the bulbs; then grab the tulip bulbs as they come to the surface. Although a potato fork (pitchfork) works the best, a shovel will do nicely.

7. I’ve dug them up and taken them home in my bucket . . . what next?
   • After the leaves and stem have turned brown and wilted, cut off the foliage just above the bulb.
   • Remove the dirt & carefully clean bulbs with a dry towel.
   • Store in a cool and dry place.
   • Plant bulbs in well-drained soil in October.
   • Dig holes about 6-inches deep and 4-inches apart. Drop in bulbs and cover with dirt.
   • Use bone-meal to fertilize.
   • Lay mulch over bulbs to help with drainage.

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8. Should I do anything next spring?  
**Answer:** In the spring, after they are done blooming, fertilize with a 12-12-12 fertilizer and keep the bulbs moist by watering appropriately. You do not need to dig up the bulbs for storage.

9. Do deer like to eat the tulip leaves, is there something I can do to keep them away? What about rabbits and squirrels?  
**Answer:** Yes, some animals (especially deer) like to nibble at the leaves as they are coming up in the spring. Try using blood-meal or putting up a fence around your tulip plantings (but it should be 8’ high). Rabbits typically leave the tulips alone, but squirrels like to chew on the bulbs and relocate them.

10. Is this a fundraiser, and how much does it cost?  
**Answer:** Yes, the proceeds go to Holland in Bloom. The cost is $10 for up to a 5-gallon bucket of bulbs. You need to bring your own bucket, as well as digging implement, gloves, and whatever else you might need.

11. What is Holland In Bloom?  
**Answer:** Holland in Bloom celebrates “the pride planted in our community”, highlights our significant accomplishments, and promotes civic pride in our beautification efforts. As a result of our collaborative efforts since 2011, our achievements have been an exciting affirmation for our community:
   - From 2011 through 2016, we participated in the America in Bloom National competition, where we received a 5-out-of-5-bloom rating and an Outstanding Achievement Award in each of the those six years of participation, and won the top award in our population category during the first four years and the top award in the Circle of Champions Mid-Sized Cities category in the fifth year.
   - In 2017, we won the International Challenge (Large Communities) category in the Communities in Bloom International Competition, received a 5 Blooms (out of 5) – Silver rating and a special mention for Six Miles of Tulip Lanes.
   - In 2018, we were a supporter and collaborator on several important community initiatives, including the Holland Oz Project (a living floral mosaic, bronze sculptures, and a yellow brick road to be installed in 2019 in Centennial Park and on the Library grounds), renovations/modifications to Window on the Waterfront for Tulip Time’s 90th Anniversary in 2019, and an urban tree inventory.
   - Holland in Bloom is competing in the 2019 America in Bloom National competition.

12. I live on a tulip lane, when can I pull the stems off?  
**Answer:** When the leaves and stem turn completely brown, you can pull them off. If you can, plant annuals for beautiful color all summer long.

13. How long will these tulips bloom?  
**Answer:** The tulips should bloom for approximately 10 days, depending on the temperature in the spring. A tulip will continue to bloom for years as long as it’s well cared-for (fertilized and watered) throughout the year. After 2-3 years, a bulb will develop bulblets (small baby-bulbs) on the tulip bulb. These bulblets should be removed to allow your bulb to continue growing and blooming. The bulblets can be discarded or kept for future tulips: however, as a young bulb, they will take years to bloom. Remember it takes 21 years for a bulb to grow enough before it blooms!

14. What is the difference between some of the varieties of tulips I’ll see?  
**Answer:** The City plants nine tulip types (Single, Double, Triumph, Darwin, Fringed, Lily, Multi-flowering, Parrot, and Viridiflora). Over 140 varieties of these tulip types are planted throughout the City. Pick up a Tulip Brochure at the dig to find out more details on all of the tulip plantings.