

After the first season's bloom, future flowers depend on the care you give the bulbs. Primarily, it's a matter of growing a good crop of foliage, because the leaves provide food for the bulb. Leaves should not be cut or mowed off until they have ripened. With tulips, when foliage is cut with the flowers or otherwise not allowed to ripen, the result is no bloom the following year. Bulbs treated this way often send up a single leaf but no flowers.

When tulips finish flowering, pick off the developing seed capsules. If you don't, the plants will direct their energy to ripening seed, rather than to storing food for future flowers. Flower stems may be left standing. Continue to water plants until the foliage turns yellow.

Sometimes other activities, particularly construction around the home, threaten to interfere with your hardy bulbs' proper aging and food production. If you can't wait until the foliage yellows to move bulbs, dig the entire plants with roots intact. Either replant them temporarily (by digging a shallow trench, laying the plants in at a slant with foliage sticking out, covering the bulbs and roots with soil, and keeping soil moist), or sort the plants and set them into their new permanent place immediately.

Even though you plant fine bulbs and give them good care, you will find that hybrid bulbs tend to throw smaller blooms after a few years and finally disappear, except, perhaps, for a few shoots of foliage. Species or botanicals, however, are more nearly perennial by nature. This group of tulips includes the *fosterana*, the *greigi*, and the *kaufmanniana*.