

Should I pre-cool my daffodil, narcissus and Dutch iris bulbs? Dan Gill's mailbag



Refrigerating daffodil, narcissus and Dutch iris bulbs won't hurt the plants but it's not necessary. (Hector Amezcua for *The Sacramento Bee*)



By Dan Gill, The Times-Picayune garden columnist

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QUESTION: I have ordered several daffodil, narcissus and Dutch iris bulbs. They should arrive in the next couple of weeks. However, several of the catalogs talk about "pre-cooling" the bulbs for 10 weeks. Is it necessary to pre-cool these bulbs here?

— *Jim James*

ANSWER: In South Louisiana, tulip and hyacinth bulbs are the only types that have to be pre-chilled before planting. (We generally find that eight weeks of chilling is sufficient for those bulbs.). It will not hurt to refrigerate the daffodil, narcissus and Dutch iris bulbs and plant them later if you like, but it's not necessary. We generally plant spring-flowering bulbs that do not require pre-chilling from late October to early December. Tulip and hyacinth bulbs that are chilled in the vegetable bin of a refrigerator for eight weeks are planted in late December or early January after the soil has cooled down.

Got a gardening question? Email Dan Gill at dgill@agcenter.lsu.edu.