



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

Johnson's Garden Talk

October 2001



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Gardening with Kids

Jan Decker, *Junior Gardeners' Club Coordinator*

If you've been by Johnson's lately you know it's bulb planting season. An easy bulb for a kid's garden is the daffodil. It comes in a range of sizes and colors, is a reliable performer year after year, and in a few months it will bring a cheerful announcement that spring is near.

Some bulbs, such as crocus, don't seem to notice if they are planted sideways, but tulips and daffodils really do grow better when they are planted "pointy end up." It can be hard for children to remember that this is important. One way to help them remember is to practice with a bucket of potting mix. Have your child scoop out a hole, place the bulb right side up and press it firmly but gently into the mix, at the same time giving it a slight twist to ensure good soil contact. Once they learn the "feel" of doing this it becomes almost instinctive, especially if they whisper "pointy end up" as they go.

A good way to let children see how the bulbs grow is to start some in a clear glass bowl filled with pebbles. Use paperwhite narcissus bulbs and plant them pointy end up in the bowl. Set them so they are nestled no more than halfway down into the pebbles and add water to just below the base of the bulbs. Refill as needed to keep the water just below but not touching the bulbs (the bulbs will rot if they sit in water). In a short time, roots will form to anchor the bulbs in the pebbles and then the tops will grow. In four to six weeks you should have blooms — and a great demonstration of how bulbs grow both under and above ground!

Reminder: if your child is entered in the Junior Gardeners' Club Pumpkin Growing Contest they have until October 15 to bring in their pumpkins to be weighed and measured.