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## tulip



### BOTANICAL NAME

*Tulipa* (TOO-li-puh)

### COMMON NAME

Tulip

### DESCRIPTION

Tulip cultivars are divided into 15 groups based on flower form. Common types of tulips include:

- single (having six "petals" [tepals]).
- single late, a.k.a. French tulips or Cottage tulips (long stems and large egg-shaped blooms)
- double (peony flowered)
- parrot (ruffled petal edges and multicolored)
- lily-flowered (pointed petals)

- fringed, or *crispa* (serrated petal edges)

### COLORS

Tulips are available in a wide range of colors including red, pink, orange, salmon/peach/apricot, yellow, purple, lavender and white/cream/ivory as well as bicolors and multicolors.

### DECORATIVE LIFE

Potted tulips should last from seven to 14 days. Decorative life varies greatly depending on cultivar, temperature, light levels and stage of development when purchased.

### AVAILABILITY

Tulip plants are available in the fall, winter and spring, generally from about mid-September through mid-May.

## purchasing tips

**BUDS** Choose and sell tulips when blooms are in the bud stage and green or just beginning to show a tinge of color. Educate customers that the tighter the flower buds, the longer the plants will last.

**BLOOMS AND FOLIAGE** Check blossoms for any signs of rot, bruising or wilt, and examine foliage for any signs of rot, bruising or breakage.

## fun facts

**WHAT'S IN A NAME** The botanical name "*Tulipa*" derives from the Turkish word "*tülband*" (meaning muslin or gauze) and the Persian "*dulband*," which means turban and, in this case, refers to the shape of the blooms.

**FAMILY MATTERS** Tulips are members of the *Liliaceae* (lily) family. In addition to lilies, common relatives include hyacinths, grape hyacinths (*Muscari*), glory lilies (*Gloriosas*), lilies-of-the-valley (*Convallaria*) and stars-of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum*).

**HOME SWEET HOME** These plants are native to the Middle East (from Turkey south to Yemen—all the countries composing the Arabian Peninsula) as well as Iran.

## in-store and consumer care

**LIGHT** Keep the plants in a well-lit environment but away from direct sunlight.

**WATER** Keep the soil moist at all times but not soggy. Water when the top of the soil is dry to the touch. Do not allow the pots to sit in water.

**TEMPERATURE** Display plants at cool temperatures—65 F to 70 F indoors is ideal, but they can tolerate temperatures as low as 45 F, especially at night. Advise customers to keep their plants in similar cool environments for maximum bloom life.

**REFRIGERATED STORAGE** Potted tulips can be stored at 33 F to 35 F for three to five days.

**HUMIDITY** Medium humidity is best.

**ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY** Tulips are sensitive to high levels of ethylene gas, so keep plants away from fruit and other produce, which can generate high levels of the harmful gas. Also, ask your supplier if the plants you purchase are treated with an ethylene inhibitor at the grower or during shipping.

**FERTILIZER** None is needed. All the food tulips need is stored in the bulbs.

**REBLOOMING** Potted tulip bulbs often are too spent to rebloom; however, if customers want to try, tell them to remove

bulbs from the pot and cut off foliage and stems close to the bulbs when the foliage has completely dried out; store the bulbs in a dark, dry environment; then plant the bulbs outdoors in the fall.

## challenges

**PESTS** Aphids are the most common problems. They can be controlled by washing or spraying affected plant parts with insecticidal soap.

**DISEASES** The most common disease affecting tulips is *Botrytis*, which can be avoided by watering in the morning.

**ELONGATION** Tulip stems (scapes) can elongate excessively if growers do not apply growth regulators. Overly tall, "leggy" stems will require support from plant stakes and twine to keep them upright. **str**



Photos: Bay City Flower Co., Inc.; Half Moon Bay, Calif.