



Saffron Crocus Planting Guide

About Saffron Crocus

Native to Mediterranean climates, Saffron crocus can be an excellent addition to any garden. Not only are they pretty to look at, they also produce the pricey saffron spice, popular in many culinary dishes.

When to Plant

Saffron Crocus corms are shipped out in the late Summer months. We recommend planting them as soon as possible once you receive them.

Where to Plant

Choose a planting area that receives full sun and has well-draining, loamy soil. Soil can be amended with sand, peat or compost to assist in the drainage. Look for a planting site that is relatively dry in the summer, which is the crocus corms' dormant time.

How to Plant

Plant corms about 2-3 inches deep and about 2-3 inches apart. Flowers generally come up within 6-8 weeks after planting, but can sometimes wait until the following Fall to appear. Grassy-like leaves will appear and will eventually die back as winter weather approaches. We suggest marking your planting site for these corms, as they tend to vanish until the next Fall when they come back with leaves and blooms.

OVERWINTERING SAFFRON IN COOLER CLIMATES:

Saffron corms will overwinter in Zones 6-9, but we recommend lifting the corms in Zones 5 and cooler and bringing them indoors for the winter. After the first frosts, but before the ground is completely frozen, gently dig out the corms and place them in a container, like a crate or a plastic tub. Cover the corms with a peat moss or sand and store in a cool (40 to 50 degrees F), dry, dark area. Plant them outside again after the threat of frost has passed in your area in the Spring, be sure not to water them until they start growing again in the Fall.

Caring for Saffron Crocus

The saffron spice is actually from the 3 orangey-red stigmas in the center of each flower. To harvest, cut the flower from the plant immediately after the flower opens and/or all signs of morning dew have dried off. Stigmas can also be pulled directly from the flower. Use small scissors or tweezers to take the 3 stigmas off of each flower. Once collected, these stigmas can be dried, but be sure not to expose them to high heat. Put them in a food dehydrator on the lowest setting, or on a screen in a warm, dry area. Store saffron in an airtight container and it will usually hold its flavor for about two years.