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How to Grow Snowdrops: The Complete Guide



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Planting, Growing, and Caring for Snowdrop Flowers

By [Samantha Johnson](#)

Last Updated: February 25, 2025



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You must love a flower that goes through the trouble of blooming in late winter. Snowdrops are small bell-shaped white flowers that don't mind snow! These early risers are deer-resistant and provide food to early pollinators.

Learn how to plant and grow snowdrops—and we guarantee you'll be delighted when the first flowers of the season appear.

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About Snowdrops

Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) are cold-hardy perennial bulbs that grow only 4 to 10 inches tall. They are known for their tiny six-segment, bell-shaped blossoms that gently tilt downward; the smaller inner petals have green markings. Each plant has a single small flower with two slender, grasslike leaves.

Members of the Amaryllidaceae family, snowdrops are native to eastern Europe and western Asia grasslands. However, they have been heavily naturalized in the U.K. and North

They're generally happiest in USDA Zones 3 to 8; they don't enjoy extremely hot temperatures and are hardy to about -30°F.

Planted in the fall, snowdrops flower from January through March until most deciduous trees leaf out. They are a lovely choice for edging and can easily be worked into your garden's landscape. These snow-white "drops" look almost magical when flowering in masses like tiny winter fairies. They seem to thrive and look incredibly charming under the dappled branches of deciduous trees.

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Snowdrops blooming in masses beneath the trees in late winter. Credit: Bank Hall

Happily, snowdrops provide both nectar and pollen sources for bees and native pollinators at a time when many plants are dormant and food is scarce. Snowdrops are also deer-resistant.

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- [How to Grow Bellflowers: The Complete Guide to Campanula](#)
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PLANTING

If you've ever planted bulbs, planting snowdrops will be a breeze! They're easy to grow and don't require a lot of attention. They will flower in both full sun and part shade and enjoy dappled light.

When to Plant

- If establishing a new planting of snowdrops in your garden, plant bulbs in the fall.
 - If you're propagating by dividing an exist-
- • • • •

How to Plant

- If planting bulbs, space them 3 inches apart and about 3 inches deep. Plant the bulbs with the pointy end up and the flat end down.
- For a more natural look, you can plant groups of bulbs close together.
- Luckily for gardeners, individual snowdrops begin to spread over time and form a little group. Snowdrops like to self-seed and form their new clumps.
- Once you have an established, mature grouping of snowdrops, you can divide them to create new plants. Do this in the spring after they finish blooming.
- To divide, simply use a hand trowel to deeply dig up the entire group of plants all the way down below the bulbs. You can then easily divide the clump into sections and replant as separate groups.
- Planting snowdrops by seed isn't recommended.
- According to the [PennState Extension](#), snowdrop bulbs benefit from stratification, which just means that they need to be exposed to some cold temperatures—below 20°F—in order to grow.
- Because snowdrops bloom so early, they're

the snowdrops will be done blooming before the trees leaf out.

- Snowdrops are tiny and can fit adorably into little spaces around your landscape—along paths, rocks, and stepping stones.



If you're looking for early blooms, snowdrops will deliver (even in the snow!).

Credit: Vadym Zaitsev

GROWING

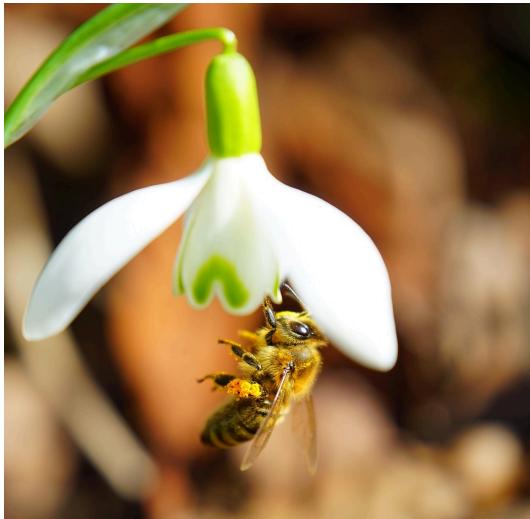
Like other early spring plants, snowdrop flowers are very hardy, quite easy to grow, and tend to propagate themselves. All you really need to do is make sure you supply them with their basic needs.

- Snowdrops love a rich, loamy (or even clay) soil with lots of organic matter. It's important for the soil to be somewhat loose at the time of planting.
- Soil pH should be neutral or can lean slightly acidic or alkaline.
- Choose a site with good natural drainage.

plenty of moisture already available to the plant in the spring.

- Slightly moist soil is OK, but don't let your snowdrops sit in too much water for too long.
- Snowdrops prefer full sun. Some varieties can tolerate some partial shade better than others, but personally I have not found shade to be beneficial to my snowdrops.
- The University of Wisconsin Extension recommends fertilizing in the spring. You can use a typical bulb fertilizer, and compost is always a good choice for general maintenance!
- Snowdrops are said to naturalize and spread on their own (my snowdrops, grown in partial shade, have not done this, but I'm going to give them a good talking-to about upping their game).
- There's no need to cut back or prune this petite perennial.
- Snowdrops are toxic and can be irritating to the skin, so you may want to wear gloves when handling the plants. Protect kids and pets, too!
- Snowdrops don't really require regular watering unless you're growing them in a container.

at a time of year when few flowers are available to them.



Your neighborhood bees will thank you if you have snowdrops in your garden.
Credit: Hans

Types

There are lots of *Galanthus nivalis* cultivars out there, but two in particular are widely loved:

- ‘Flore Pleno’ has double white flowers.
- ‘Viridapice’ has charming green spots on the white flowers. (Stunning!)

HARVESTING

their natural beauty with your eyes and
your camera!

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PESTS/DISEASES

As with many other plants grown from bulbs, such as onions and daffodils, your average assortment of garden pests will probably leave your snowdrops alone. Deer, rabbits, and other animals don't bother snowdrops, and most insects will be deterred because of the toxin present in the flower. Slugs are among the few pests that may bother snowdrops, but it's unlikely they'll be a significant nuisance. Overall, snowdrops have no trouble with insect pests or diseases at all.

WIT AND WISDOM

- *Galanthus nivalis* roughly translates to “milk flower of the snow.”
- Snowdrops are VERY popular around the world and snowdrop festivals are a wonderful tradition—see if you can find one near you!
- Because of their appearance in early spring, snowdrops have been associated with rebirth and purity.
- The name *snowdrop* is very fitting for a white flower, but it also goes by a slew of aliases ... Fair Maids of February, the Flower of Hope (since it's one of the first signs of spring) and Candlemas Bells.
- The leaves of a snowdrop flower contain a protein that acts as a kind of natural antifreeze, allowing the plant to recover from the subfreezing temperatures it encounters during its early spring growth.

BULBS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Samantha Johnson is an award-winning author and gardening expert with over 20 years of experience cultivating heirloom vegetables and sharing her passion for rural living.

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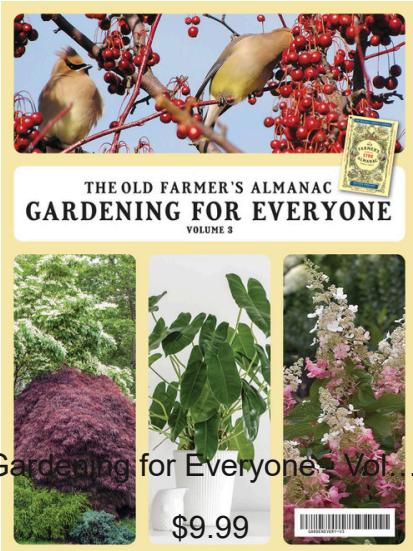
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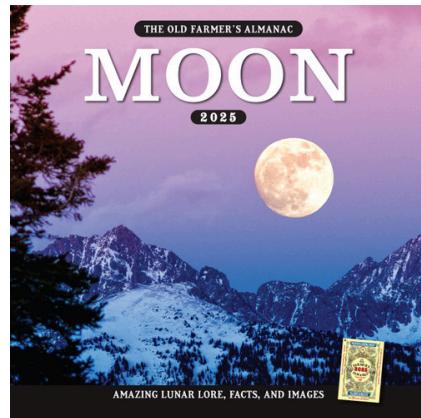
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