

# ➤ Tried & tested / Bulb planters

Autumn gold  
Top tips for using autumn  
leaves **Page 17**

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**TOP TIP**

ON HEAVY SOILS ADD GRIT TO THE BOTTOM OF EACH PLANTING HOLE

## Make light work of bulb planting

Geoff Hodge tests whether dedicated bulb planters are really worth the investment

WITH autumn and spring-flowering bulb planting season just around the corner, I thought it was a good time to test bulb planters. In fact, I wanted to know if they are a worthwhile investment or whether a bog-standard trowel does just as good a job.

If you're planting one or two bulbs, then it's probably not worth buying a proper planter. But if you want to plant lots of bulbs, then a tool designed specifically for the job should be a good idea.

There are two basic types - hand held, and those with long handles. The hand-held planters are best used kneeling or crouching next to the ground and, as a result, are best used when planting up beds and borders or containers. Those with long handles allow you to produce the planting hole standing up, but you then have to kneel down or bend over to plant the bulb, but the extra

force you can exert on them makes them a better bet for planting in problem soils and in the lawn.

Of course, bulb planters don't only have to be used for flower bulbs - plant onions, garlic and seed potatoes with them and you can even use them for planting bedding or small plants. And, I found them useful for removing deep-rooted perennial weeds - especially in the lawn!

### The test

To see if bulb planters were a worthwhile investment, I also planted some bulbs with my trusty trowel.

I planted in the reasonably good, well-prepared soil on my allotment, in some fairly heavy, clay soil at home and in the lawn.

Generally speaking, as I originally thought, the hand-held planters were good in the soil at my allotment, generally producing a better hole than my trowel, because of their sharp or toothed cutting edge,

although not so good when they came up against a stone - which you could easily flip out with a trowel. Those with a soil release button also allowed me to grab dry soil without the hole filling back in, and to easily replace the soil after planting.

But for heavy clay soil and particularly in the lawn, the long-handled planters were definitely the best option - the hand planters didn't have enough 'oomph' to cut through the soil because there was no long handle to put your full weight on. Having said that, both the lawn and the soil were very dry - on thoroughly wetting them the hand planters did work better.

Long-handled planters with both a foot tread or plate and a T-bar or D-grip allowed you to push, jump up and down and twist to get the cutter deeper into the soil. In both situations they were far better than a trowel - and I didn't end up with blisters when using them!

## ➤ Hand-held planters

### ➤ De Wit Daffodil Bulb Planter

- Weight 708g (approx 25oz)
- Planter carbon steel with sharpened cutting edge; 14cm (5½in) planting depth; 6cm (2⅓/8in) diameter
- Handle ash
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Price guide £19.99; available from [www.crocus.co.uk](http://www.crocus.co.uk)



### ➤ Draper Tools Bulb Planter

- Weight 307g (approx 11oz)
- Planter chrome-plated steel with cutting teeth; 11cm (4¼in) long; 6cm (2⅓/6in) diameter
- Handle plastic; soil release button
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features 10cm (4in) planting depth on side
- Price guide £3.65



### ➤ Spear & Jackson Select Bulb Planter

- Weight 238g (approx 8¼oz)
- Planter stainless steel with cutting teeth; 11cm (4¼in) long; 6cm (2⅓/6in) diameter
- Handle plastic; soil release button
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features: 10cm (4in) planting depth on side
- Price guide £7.99



### ➤ Wolf-Garten Bulb Planter

- Weight 367g (approx 13oz)
- Planter stainless steel with cutting teeth; 11cm (4¼in) long; 6cm (2⅓/6in) diameter
- Handle plastic; soil release button
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features 10cm (4in) planting depth on side
- Price guide £9.99



### ➤ Yeoman Bulb Planter

- Weight 297g (approx 10½oz)
- Planter coated carbon steel with cutting teeth; 11cm (4¼in) long; 6cm (2⅓/6in) diameter
- Handle plastic; soil release button
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features 10cm (4in) planting depth on side
- Price guide £3.99



## ➤ Long-handled planters

### ➤ Bulldog Tools Premier Bulb Planter

- Weight 2,085g (approx 4lb 8oz)
- Planter carbon steel; 15cm (6in) long; 7cm (2¾in) diameter
- Handle ash, T-bar; 97cm (38in) long
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features narrow foot tread on both sides
- Price guide £56.50



GOOD CHOICE IF YOU'RE PLANTING BULBS BY THE HUNDRED EACH YEAR

### ➤ Draper Tools Long Handled Bulb Planter

- Weight 936g (approx 2lb)
- Planter chrome plated steel; 12.5cm (5in) long; 6cm (2⅓/6in) diameter
- Handle chrome plated steel, D-grip; 96cm (37¾in) long
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features narrow foot tread on both sides
- Price guide £10.49



### ➤ Joseph Bentley Stainless Steel Long Handled Bulb Planter

- Weight 1650g (approx 3lb 10oz)
- Planter stainless steel with cutting teeth; 15cm (6in) long; 7cm (2¾in) diameter
- Handle ash, T-bar; 99cm (39in) long
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features planting depth on side; broad foot tread on both sides
- Price guide £30.49



### ➤ Darlac Long Handle Bulb Planter

- Weight 919g (approx 2lb)
- Planter carbon steel with sharpened cutting edge; cut away head up to 14.5cm (5¾in) long; 6cm (2⅓/6in) diameter
- Handle hardwood; 142cm (56in) long
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features foot plate on the side
- Price guide £17.95



### ➤ Sneeboer Timber Bulb Planter

- Weight 1278g (approx 2lb 12oz)
- Planter stainless steel with sharpened cutting edge; 12.5cm (5in) long; 4.5cm (1¾in) diameter
- Handle ash, T-bar; 88cm (34¾in) long
- Planting in good soil ★★★★★
- Planting in heavy soil ★★★★★
- Planting in lawn ★★★★★
- Other features foot plate on the side
- Price guide £57.95; available from Harrod Horticultural



NICE WIDE HANDLE IS GOOD FOR GARDENERS WITH BIG HANDS

## Suppliers

- Bulldog Tools**  
01279 401572  
[www.bulldogtools.co.uk](http://www.bulldogtools.co.uk)
- Crocus**  
08445 572233  
[www.crocus.co.uk](http://www.crocus.co.uk)
- Darlac**  
01753 547790  
[www.darlac.com](http://www.darlac.com)
- Draper Tools**  
02380 266355  
[www.draper.co.uk](http://www.draper.co.uk)
- Harrod Horticultural**  
08454 025300  
[www.harrodhorticultural.com](http://www.harrodhorticultural.com)

- Joseph Bentley**  
01905 798666  
[www.josephbentley.co.uk](http://www.josephbentley.co.uk)  
Supplies direct to garden centres & stores
- Spear & Jackson**  
0114 281 4242  
[www.spear-and-jackson.com](http://www.spear-and-jackson.com)
- Wolf-Garten from E P Barrus**  
01869 363636  
[www.wolf-garten.co.uk](http://www.wolf-garten.co.uk)
- Yeoman**  
01905 791984  
[www.yeomangarden.com](http://www.yeomangarden.com)  
Supplies direct to garden centres & stores

## Win our 'best buy'

We have five of our 'best buy' Joseph Bentley Long Handled Bulb Planters to give away! Send your name and address to Garden News Bulb Planter Giveaway, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Peterborough PE2 6EA or enter online at [www.greatcompetitions.co.uk](http://www.greatcompetitions.co.uk) Closing date is September 13. Please write 'do not contact' if you don't want to be contacted by us or by carefully selected partner organisations.



## ➤ Win!

# Hayter Scarifier to give away...

WORTH £521



REGULAR scarifying of your lawn to remove old grass stems and dead moss that builds up into a dense 'thatch' over time ensures that water and fertiliser can reach the roots of your lawn.

Featuring 15 fixed cutting blades, this machine will allow you to de-thatch and help maintain a healthy, lush lawn simply and efficiently. A single point hand wheel adjustment

provides infinitely variable cutting heights and easy to use control.

- Powerful and durable Briggs & Stratton engine
- Comfortable handlebar with easy-to-use controls
- Robust, high quality steel deck
- 40-litre collection bag

For more information on this, or any of the Hayter product range, visit [www.hayter.co.uk](http://www.hayter.co.uk) or call 0800 781 8832.

## How to enter

We have 1 Hayter SP36 Scarifier to give away. For your chance to win send your name and address on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to: Garden News Hayter Giveaway, PO Box 57, Coates, Peterborough PE7 2FE or enter online at [www.greatcompetitions.co.uk](http://www.greatcompetitions.co.uk) The closing date is September 20.

This prize draw is open to residents of the UK only, aged 18 years or over, except employees of Bauer Consumer Media Ltd or anyone else professionally associated with the prize draw/competition. All prizes are non-transferable and there are no cash alternatives.

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