

White Squill Care Sheet

Planting: Plant bulbs so as the top of the bulb is even with the soil surface. Space bulbs 18-24 inches apart to allow for future growth. Giving ample room when first planting will encourage bulbs to split and further multiply

Soil: Good drainage is the most important criteria. The sandier the soil the better. Avoid heavy clay soils, for bulbs can rot if in a constant soggy location. The root system is quite extensive therefore growing in containers is not recommended

Location: Squill prefer full sun or the shade of a deciduous tree. Remember the vegetative stage is November to May hence a tree without its leaves is not competing for sunlight. In fact a little summer shade is beneficial.

Watering: It is easier to water Squill too much than not enough. Squill is native to the Mediterranean where rainfall is only 12-18 inches per year. Like most bulbs a dry obligate dormancy is required, so plant in a part of your garden that stays on the dry side in the summer.

Fertilizing: Squill does very well without additions of fertilizers. If planted next to other plants that do require fertilizer it will not be negatively affected. Bulb growth is enhanced with inputs of any general-purpose fertilizer. For those gardeners who maintain organic standards squill is an ideal addition to your garden. As a natural rodenticide it is avoided by gophers, it has no known insect pest, and rabbits will only occasional nibble in the leaves. In general it thrives on neglect.

Frost Damage: Squill is hardy down to 28 degrees F. Below that leaves may show damage but the bulb will remain intact. Simply placing a sheet over the vegetation on the occasional frosty night should minimize any leaf damage.

Annual Cycle: Squill is a winter growing plant. Leaves first appear in early November as a green spike. In December the spike starts to open to many individual leaves. By mid-March each plant will stand 30-36 inches tall and about the same across. Some time in May as the temperature increases the leaves will start to turn yellow. This will last a month. Once the leaves are dry, remove with a rake so they do not interfere with the flower. Leave the bulb as dry as possible for a month in June or July. Shallow summer irrigation will encourage and enhance flowering.

One bulb will produce one flower. Flowering occurs August – September depending on many variables. Flowers first appear about the size of one's little finger. From there it shoot up 4'-5' in 21-28 days depending on the temperature: the hotter the faster. Stems growing 2"-3" per day is not uncommon. When the flower reaches about 80% of its height rows of florets will start to open from the bottom. This is the ideal time if you desire to cut the stem to do so. Each day another 2"-3" of rows of florets will open, culminating in a mass of tiny white flowers opening over a 10 day period. Staggering the summer irrigation can extend the flowering period between bulbs.

The flower will actually keep longer if it is cut and put in a vase than if left in the garden. As a cut, flower Squill has a very unique quality of changing every day. It will continue to grow 6"-8" after it is cut, and as a response to its own weight, it will twist and turn giving it a very organic, sensual appearance.

Name: *Urginea maritima* liliaceae -- As previously mentioned, squill is native to the Mediterranean. Urginea was named for an ancient Arab tribe known as Ben Urgan. Maritima implies it grows along the coast. And it is a member of the lily family.

Source: All bulbs are of clonal stock and between 8-10 years old. These mature bulbs will need two years to establish themselves well enough to flower. They will flower annually once established. Bulbs are grown in Murrieta Ca., without irrigation, where the climate is hotter and dryer than the coast. If they grow there they will certainly thrive on the coast.