

## Q&A with Floriade's Head Gardener

Thanks to everyone who came along to the live Q&A session with Floriade Head Gardener, Shannon and Floriade team member Khi.

The team shared some great tips about how to get the most out of your bulbs and annuals.



### How do I keep birds away from my garden?

A few groups are having problems with birds in their Floriade Community displays. Shannon and Khi recommend erecting a fence of chicken wire around the edge of your garden bed then laying bird netting over the top.

Birds are typically landing in your garden to dig for grubs, so they may unintentionally pull your annuals out. If this happens you can replant the annuals and they will still grow.

Unfortunately, while they look fantastic, Scarecrows are not effective in keeping birds away.



### Should I be using liquid fertiliser over the next few months?

Yes! In Commonwealth Park the gardening team use kelp and natural fertilisers. Shannon recommends natural fertilisers like kelp, Seasol or anything fish extract based – these are excellent for promoting plant growth.

Fertilise your garden every couple of weeks. If your fertiliser is not natural, do not fertilise as frequently.



### When should we expect to see tulips and annuals flowering?

You may be wondering... are my annuals flowering too early? In short, no.

If your pansies are already flowering, Shannon and Khi recommend pinching the flowers off to give the plant more energy to bloom later and promote more flower growth. Annuals are perennial so if you pinch the flowers off, they will flower again.

Tulips only flower once, so do not pinch these off. Your tulips are all mixed colours and varieties which means they will grow at different rates. This makes for a spectacular display for the entire month of Floriade. You may see some little green sprouts peeking through your soil soon.





## How often should I water? Is all this rain bad for my garden?

You should water your garden about twice a week in winter and when it is cool. When the weather starts to get warmer you may need to increase frequency of watering.

All the rain we are having is excellent for your gardens! With all this rain make sure you do not overwater. An easy way to tell if you need to water is to check your soil. Poke your finger into the soil, if it is moist you do not need to water, if it is dry at the top your plants need a drink.



## Is mulch okay for my garden bed?

Yes! All mulch is good mulch as it keeps your soil a little warmer. Woodchip and sugarcane are both excellent.



## Tips for the best garden come spring?

Water, weed and watch them grow!

If you wish, you can aerate your soil by scratching it up around your annuals. Carefully hand weed around your annuals to help them grow and just let your bulbs do their thing.

If you are still planting, don't worry our team at Commonwealth Park are still planting some of the beds. Your plants will still bloom in time!

