

Tulip – national symbol of the Netherlands

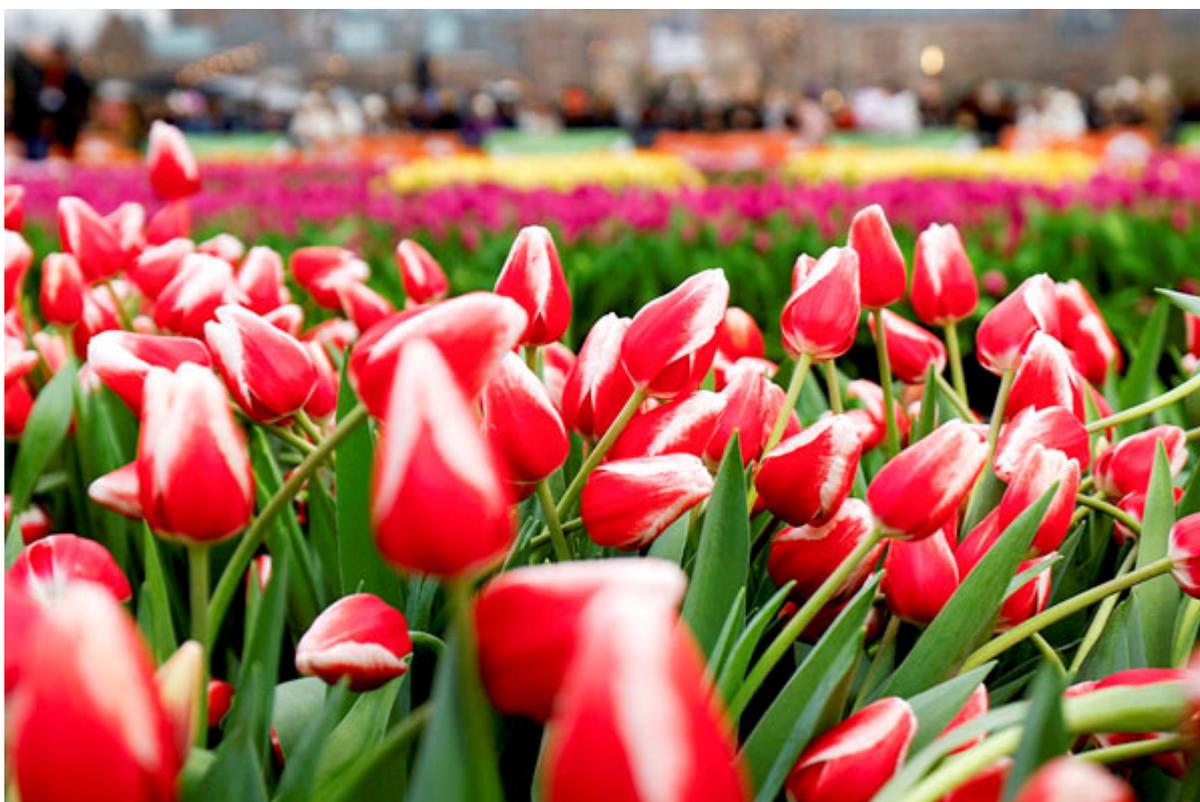
Author(s): Растителна защита
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On the third Saturday of January, the capital of the Netherlands turns into a vast colourful garden. With nearly 200,000 tulips on Museum Square in the city centre, the Dutch mark the beginning of the spring flower season.



On National Tulip Day, in a specially designed large temporary garden on the square, everyone can pick their own colourful bouquet from the diverse varieties for which the local breeders are renowned.



“Since tulips first arrived in the Netherlands from Asia at the end of the 16th century, they have been inextricably linked with the local culture,” says Arjan Smit, chairman of the organisation *Tulpen Promotie Nederland (TPN)*, which consists of over 500 Dutch tulip growers. Their task has been to organise Tulip Day for 14 years now. In 2025 this event was particularly sumptuous because of the landmark birthday of the Dutch capital, which celebrated 750 years since its founding.



Tulips in January?

The tulips that you can pick in the temporary garden in the centre of Amsterdam are grown in greenhouses from November to January. The tulip fields around Amsterdam start blooming only at the end of March, when the official outdoor season begins.

The kitchen garden of tulips in the Netherlands

In Keukenhof there are fairy-tale fields, coloured all the way to the horizon in the vivid shades of tulips. It is also the largest bulb-flower garden in the world, known in the past as the hunting park of Castle Hainaut, where Countess Jacqueline of Holland personally cultivated flowers, spices, and herbs. This is where the name of the place comes from – Keukenhof (The Kitchen Garden).



The gardens are open only 2 months a year in spring – this year you can visit Keukenhof from 20.03 to 11.05.2025. They were established in 1949 as an exhibition of Dutch gardeners growing tulips. Every year about 7 million flower bulbs are selected from around 800 tulip varieties. The home of tulips is located near the town of Lisse between Amsterdam and The Hague and welcomes nearly 800,000 visitors per year. The park covers an area of 32 hectares and the paths are 15 km long – enough to get lost, at least for a while, in the fairy-tale world of tulips.



The tulip (*Tulipa*) has travelled a long road to fame from the high mountains of Central Asia, through the famous gardens of Sultan Suleiman I the Magnificent, the lands of the Habsburgs, and finally to the Netherlands, which has proclaimed it its national symbol. Today the country is the world's largest exporter of flowers and controls nearly 80% of the tulip trade.

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