

The October
HORT REPORT
Helpful tips from
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LAWN & TURF:

- You can continue to replant or establish cool-season lawns like fescue.
- The mowing height for fescue should be lowered to approximately 2 1/2 inches for fall and winter cuttings.
- Broad leaf weeds like dandelions can be easily controlled with a pre-emergent.
- Mow and neatly edge warm season lawns before killing frost.

VEGETABLES:

- Dig sweet potatoes and harvest pumpkins and winter squash.
- Remove green fruit from tomato plants when frost threatens.
- Harvest Oriental Persimmons and Paw Paws as they begin to change color.
- There is still time to plant radishes and mustard in the garden.
- Use a cold frame device to plant spinach, lettuce and various other cool-season crops for production most of the winter.
- Plant cool-season cover crops like Austrian Winter Peas, Wheat Clover and Rye in otherwise bare garden plots.
- Remove all debris from garden to prevent overwintering of various garden pests.
- Start new planting beds preparations with plenty of organic matter.

GENERAL LANDSCAPE:

- Plant cool-season annuals like Pansies, Ornamental Cabbage & Kale, Snapdragons and Dusty Miller when temperatures begin to cool.
- Begin planting Spring-flowering bulbs like Tulips, Crocus, Hyacinths and Daffodils.
- Good companion plants for bulbs are ground covers such as Ajuga, Vinca, English Ivy, Alyssum, Moneywort, Thrift, Phlox and Leadwort.

- Peonies, Day Lilies, and other spring-flowering perennials should be divided or planted now.
- Dig and store tender perennials like Cannas, Dahlias and Caladiums in a cool dry place.
- Purchase trees from nurseries and garden centers at this time to select the fall color you prefer.
- Many perennials can be planted at this time and the selection is quite nice.
- Plant Mums and Asters and keep them watered during dry conditions. Don't crowd since they take a couple of years to reach maturity.
- Check and treat houseplants for insect pests before bringing them indoors and repot root bound plants.

WATERGARDENS:

- Take tropical water garden plants indoors when water temperatures near 50 degrees.
- Close the water garden for the winter by placing hardy plants in the deeper areas of the pool.
- Stop feeding the fish.
- Cover with bird netting to catch dropping leaves in winter months.

IT'S FALL YA'LL! Time to prune...

PERENNIAL HIBISCUS:

Commonly known as hardy hibiscus, perennial hibiscus may look delicate, but this tough plant produces huge, exotic-looking flowers that rival those of tropical hibiscus. This easy-care plant requires very little pruning, regular maintenance will keep it healthy and promote better, bigger flowers.

- Cut any dead stems or branches to 8 – 12 inches in fall, just before applying a protective layer of mulch. Pull back mulch in spring when there is no danger of hard freezes. If any branches freeze during winter, cut these to the ground.
- When the new growth appears, you can trim and shape the plant as desired. Keep in mind that perennial hibiscus is a slow starter, so do not worry if no growth is present in early spring. It may take a string of warm days before the plant decided to emerge.
- Pinching back growing tips with your fingers when plant reaches a height of about 6 inches. Pinching will encourage the plant to branch out, which means a bushier plant with more blooms.
- Do not wait too long, as flowers bloom on “NEW” growth and pinching too late may delay flowering. However, you can pinch the plant's growing tips again at 10 – 12 inches if growth appears spindly or thin.
- Deadhead wilted blooms throughout the season to keep the plant neat and encourage a longer blooming period. To deadhead, simply pinch the old blooms with your fingernails, or snip them with pruners.

- Some types of perennial hibiscus can be rambunctious self-seeders. If this is a concern, be vigilant about deadheading old blooms, which will prevent the plant from setting seed.

FLOWER BULBS IN THE GARDEN

Gardeners everywhere are beginning to see the value of allowing a growing space to generate its own natural beauty. As the cold gray days of winter begin to fade, naturalized bulbs spring up with colorful beauty.

So, here's the MAGIC! ...Bulbs that naturalize do their own garden work every year with little to no fuss. They come up in all their glory and bloom and increase in number every year. It makes sense that they're a great investment.

Dig... drop... done... it's that simple!

Gardening Once FOR TWO SEASONS



PLANT THIS FALL



RESULTS THIS SPRING

Plant flower bulbs this fall, like tulips or daffodils and then plant pansies or mums over the bulbs. The bulbs will bloom as usual in the spring and the pansies or mums will give you color this fall.

Look forward to something beautiful!

THE BEAUTY OF BULBS:

- Bulbs are underground flower incubators. Deep in the bulb, a tiny baby flower is resting until it's time to burst into life. Surrounded inside with enough perfect food to nourish it through long dormancy periods, and a covering that protects it until it opens, the bulb nurtures it until it's the perfect time to sprout, and then sends forth a magnificent specimen. When the flower has finished bloom cycle, the dying leaves feed the bulb until they wilt away. All bulbs need from you is to be placed in the ground at the appropriate season of the year, given a liberal drink of water then leave them to work their magic.

VARIETY OF BULBS:

- Flower bulbs come in seemingly limitless variety which makes them perfectly suitable for any garden design you can dream up. Planting just a few can easily provide beautiful color in your garden for several months. Daffodils are the first sign of spring and Dahlias will bloom until frost hits the pumpkins. The three most important factors to keep in mind are color, plant height and flowering period.

WHEN TO PLANT BULBS:

In general, there are two seasons for bulb planting...

- FALL: After soil temperatures are below 50 degrees. These bulbs bloom the following spring and require the cold winter temperatures for development. But let's say winter arrives and your bulbs are still in the bag... not to worry! Bulbs are pre-programmed to grow so even if you have to plant through the snow – plant your bulbs!
- SPRING: After the danger of frost has passed. Tender bulbs love soil temperatures at least 60 degrees. These bulbs bloom Summer/Fall.

WHERE TO BUY BULBS:

- ROSS SEED COMPANY!
- Nursery, Seed and Farm Stores
- Hardware Store
- Do-It-Yourself Centers & Mass Merchandisers
- Catalogue Mail Order & The Internet
- Supermarkets

HOW TO PLANT BULBS:

Most bulbs thrive in either full sun or partial sun and in almost any location with good drainage. Avoid planting at the base of hills or under drainpipes where water collects and will rot the bulbs.

- STEP ONE: Good soil preparation. Make sure it is loose and porous to make planting easier and because good drainage is necessary for all types of bulbs. Adding peat moss to the soil is a good trick to improve drainage.

The planting depth of the bulb depends on their size. A good rule of thumb is that the depth should be 3X the diameter of the bulb. However, plant depths vary by variety. For more specific planting depths, check the label on your bulb package.

The spacing of the bulbs depends on the effect you are trying to achieve. For best results, plant in clumps or large groups rather than in single rows.

- STEP TWO: After loosening the soil press the bulbs, with pointed ends up, in the bed or container. Cover them with removed soil and tap down slightly.
- STEP THREE: Water thoroughly.

It's as easy as dig...drop...done!

HOW TO PLANT DAFFODILS:

- Daffodils are a lovely addition to the spring garden. The easy-to-care-for flowers add bright spots of sunshine that will return year after year. The trick is to plant them properly.
- In Oklahoma, the best time to plant is early Autumn. When growing, you should plant them in groups of ten or more. Make a loose circle with seven bulbs and put three in the middle. You can plant in bigger blocks if space allows, using 25 bulbs or more. For aesthetic reasons, you don't want to mix different cultivars within each planting group. The effect will be better if you plant one kind together.
- STEP ONE: Plant the bulbs with the pointy side up and the fatter, somewhat flattened end down.
- STEP TWO: Plant twice as deep as the bulb is tall. In other words, if a bulb is 2 inches from the base to the tip, you would dig a 6-inch-deep hole to put the bulb 4 inches below the soil level. Deep planting prevents frost heave and protects the bulbs from accidental damage from spades and rakes. You don't really need to measure the hole, just give it your best guess. Larger bulbs go deeper, and smaller bulbs go closer to the surface. Plant bulbs more deeply in sandy soils and more shallowly in heavier clay-type soils.
- STEP THREE: After you cover the bulbs with soil and water well, mulch the area with any good mulch or chopped leaves to help protect it.
- STEP FOUR: Add in a 14-14-14 granular fertilizer to help the bulbs grow.

In zones 6-7 daffodils will bloom in mid-spring.

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

- A large group of flower bulbs are far more fab than just a few planted here and there. For small groupings try container plantings using pots, baskets, or window boxes.
- Freezing temperatures can crack terra cotta pots and ornamental planters. By first planting bulbs in plastic pots then placing the plastic pots inside the earthen one, you will create a natural insulation between the two.
- Lay your bulbs on top of the soil where you want to plant them. After planting, poke a twig into the soil to mark where you have already planted.
- Plant markers can be pretty and practical ways to mark sections of similar bulbs. Buy plastic, wood, terra cotta or make your own.
- Plant low-growing bulb varieties up front and taller ones at the back of your beds or containers.
- Note the flowering times. Not all Tulips for instance, will bloom at the same time. A little planning will greatly increase the number of months you will enjoy bulb flowers.
- When leaves drop and fall, rake a layer of them over the newly planted bulbs. They will love the extra bedding.

Bulbs are among the easiest flowers to grow. Even the most novice gardener can create a breathtakingly beautiful Spring, Summer and Fall garden with bulbs!

BULBS 101:

- The bigger the bulb, the larger the flower.
- Bulbs should be planted as deep as twice their height.
- Most bulbs require good soil drainage.
- Green foliage **MUST** be allowed to ripen and turn brown, no braiding or other cutesy stuff.
- Shop early for best selections.
- Read the labels for planting instructions.
- Be wary of bargains.
- Inspect the bulbs. Healthy bulbs are generally firm bulbs.
- Steer clear of bulbs that are mushy or show signs of mold or fungus.

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Till next time... HAPPY GARDENING!