



## Garden Guide

### Things to do this month

Plant spring flowering bulbs.

Cut down stems and foliage of herbaceous perennials after two or three hard frosts and when leaves begin to brown.

Dig and bring in cannas, dahlias and gladiolus. Dry, clean and store in a cool location free from frost.

After several hard frosts add mulch to your perennial flower garden. A one inch layer of straw or chopped leaves will help conserve soil moisture and protect the root system.

When deciding on new trees or shrubs to plant around your home, remember to select varieties that will fit the location when they are at their mature height. This will greatly reduce pruning and other maintenance in the future.

Pick bagworms from evergreen shrubs. This will eliminate the spring hatch from over wintered eggs.

Remove leaves from lawn to reduce lawn problems. Compost or shred and use them for mulch.

Fall is the time to control broadleaf weeds in the lawn, such as white clover, dandelion and ground ivy.

Make a note of any particularly productive or unsatisfactory varieties of vegetables that you planted this year. Such information can be very useful when planning next years garden.

Remove any diseased or insect infested plant material from your garden, it may harbor over wintering stages of disease or insect pests. If you leave this plant material in your garden, you are leaving diseases and insects which will begin to reproduce again next spring and add to next years pest problem.

Cure pumpkins, butternut and hubbard squash at temperatures between 70 to 80° F for two or three weeks immediately after harvest. After curing, store them in a dry place at 55 to 60° F.

Use dried herbs to make fragrant wreaths and dried flower arrangements.

Clean up the orchard and small fruit plantings. Sanitation is essential for good maintenance. Dried fruits or mummies carry disease organisms through the winter to attack next years crop.

Nut trees are a fine addition to the home landscape. They may accent the house, provide shade in the summer and even become a food source.

Christmas cactus need special care now to get its beautiful flowers this December. Buds will form at 50 to 60° F or if the plant is exposed to at least 13 hours of complete darkness each night.

Fall is an excellent time for taking soil samples in your lawn and garden. Soil tests will measure the pH of the soil, organic matter content and the levels of some of the major elements required for plant growth, such as phosphorus and potassium. (MJF)

## Horticulture Information Center

NUFACTS  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
1-800-832-5441; or  
441-7188 in the Lincoln area

To listen to a NUFACTS information center message, call the number above on a touch-tone phone, then enter a three-digit number listed below. Call 441-7180 to receive a brochure with all the NUFACTS message topics.

### NUFACTS

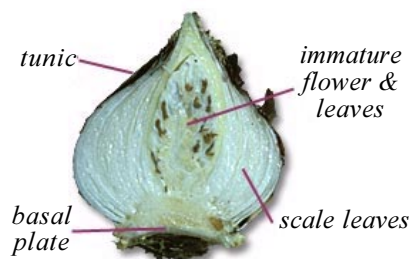
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## Growing Hardy Bulbs

Hardy bulbs provide early bloom in flower gardens. Growing them successfully requires a knowledge of life cycle, cultural requirements and use. The term hardy refers to their ability to withstand low winter temperatures and bloom year after year.

A true bulb is defined as a modified, underground stem, usually surrounded by scale like, modified leaves, and containing stored food for the shoots enclosed within. The scales are held together by a hardened stem tissue, known as the basal plate, which is located at the base of the bulb. Tulip, daffodil and hyacinth are examples of true bulbs. Crocus, thought by many to be a bulb, is actually a corm. This is a mass of fleshy tissue with a bud on the top surface. This tissue disintegrates as the stored food is used to produce roots and shoots; a new corm forms on top of the old one. Bulbs and corms are living structures and require careful handling even while in a dormant state.

In general, hardy bulbs produce foliage and blooms in the spring. They are dormant during the summer months. Low



temperatures are required to break dormancy so growth may resume in fall and early winter. Good quality bulbs produce good blooms. Usually the larger the bulb, the better it will bloom. Bulbs should be firm, heavy, and in good condition. The skin should be smooth, of good color and free from injury. The basal plate must be intact.

Bulbs can be obtained from many sources in the fall. The best time to plant hardy bulbs is late September until late October. Choose a planting site in full sun. Soil of a medium sandy-loam texture is ideal because it provides good drainage. If soil is a heavy clay, add organic material such as peat moss or compost. Raised beds also provide good drainage. Work soil 12 inches deep and incorporate three pounds of a complete fertilizer, such as a 5-10-10 per

100 square feet as you are preparing the soil.

Planting depths will vary. Plant hyacinths six inches deep; tulips six to eight inches and daffodils six to eight inches deep. Smaller bulbs, like crocus, are planted shallower, approximately three inches deep. Large bulbs should be spaced four to six inches apart; small bulbs one to two inches. For a greater effect, plant in clumps or irregular masses rather than singly. Once planted, water the bulbs well and add one or two inches of mulch.

In the spring, when bulb foliage has emerged one or two inches, remove excess mulch and pull any weeds. Water is needed especially during bud and foliage growth. If rainfall is insufficient, apply additional water. As bulbs finish blooming, remove faded blooms to eliminate seed set which reduces bulb growth. Maintain foliage for six weeks for good bulb growth and to guarantee bloom the following season. Allow foliage to die down naturally. Foliage can be removed when it is yellowed, fallen over and comes loose when slightly pulled. (MJF)

## Time for Garden Cleanup

Now that the end of the growing season is near, it is time to do the garden cleanup work. While this chore may seem like busy-work to some, it is important to mention the disease and insect prevention purpose of this task. The hours and labor spent now may be more than paid back by fewer problems in the next growing season.

The garden cleanup really has four parts: complete removal of old garden plants that have had disease or insects, searching for and removal of all rotten or

diseased fruits that may have fallen, turning back into the soil all crop residue from plants that have been harvested but did not die from diseases or pests, and mixing all organic mulches from garden areas where it is no longer needed. Trellises and stakes that are no longer needed can be taken out, cleaned and stored for next year.

Some gardeners may leave this cleanup for the whole garden until the last fall vegetable has been harvested or worse yet, until just before next spring's

planting. It is a good idea to clean up each garden area when it is finished even though other parts of the garden are still producing fall crops.

Crop residues from healthy plants are a valuable source of organic matter, which most of our soils need. This term is used for all portions of plants left over after harvest: stems, stubble, mulch and root residues. These materials can be cut up and put on your compost pile. (MJF)

## Storing Vegetables

After a successful garden season, you may have vegetables you would like to store until you are ready to use them. Here are suggestions to help store your vegetables properly.

**Carrots:** Trim carrot tops to one inch. Layer unwashed carrots in a container of moist sand. Carrots can be stored in a cool place, 35 to 40° F for 4-5 months.

**Onions:** Store cured onions in a dry location at 35 to 40° F.

**Potatoes:** Cure fresh dug potatoes 1 to 2 weeks in a dark, dry location at 50 to 60° F. Store cured potatoes in a dark location at 40° F for 5 to 6 months.

**Sweet potatoes:** Cure fresh dug sweet potatoes at 80 to 85° F for 10 days. Store cured sweet potatoes in a dry, dark location at 55 to 60° F for 4 to 6 months.

**Turnips:** Trim turnip tops to one inch. Layer unwashed turnips in a container of moist sand. Turnips can be stored in a cool place, 35 to 40° F for 4 to 5 months.

**Winter squash:** Cure vine ripen winter squash for 10 days at 80 to 85° F and high humidity.

Store mature, cured winter squash in a dry location at 55° F for 2 to 6 months. Acorn squash will keep well in a dry place at 45° F for 35 to 40 days. Do not cure acorn squashes before storing them.

For more information about storing other vegetables or

fruits, please refer to NebGuide, "Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables" (G95-1264). This publication is available at your local extension office. Storing your vegetables properly will insure that you will have good quality produce to enjoy in the months ahead. (MJF)

## Hints for Fruit Storage

Proper storage conditions are needed for fruits that are not consumed immediately after harvest. The key to good storage is in controlling the temperature and relative humidity of the storage area. For fruits such as apples, grapes and pears, store them in cool temperatures at 32 to 40° F and moist conditions at 90 to 95 percent relative humidity.

Select containers for storage that have smooth inner surfaces. Baskets, melon crates or boxes are suitable. Line these containers with

aluminum foil to help retain moisture.

Apples and pears will likely last through the fall and winter if stored properly. Apples should be harvested firm and ripe to insure the longest storage possible.

Harvest pears when they are full sized but still green and hard. Pears ripen quickly at 60 to 65° F.

Grapes will usually keep for one or two months. Grapes should be stored alone because they pick up odors of other fruits and vegetables. (MJF)