

Spring is in Bloom

With Spring beginning Sunday I thought an article on spring flowers would be timely. I have crocuses and daffodils in bloom at my house and the tulips are coming up. All of these flowers are grown from bulbs that I planted in the fall or a couple of years before in the fall. If you see flowers this time of year that you like, make yourself a note to buy what you liked in the fall when you should plant bulbs for spring flowering plants.

According to the WVU Garden calendar we should order spring-flowering bulbs around September 1, and then follow the directions included with the bulbs you purchased for the best results. Depending on the types of bulbs you purchase planting dates may vary. The WVU Garden calendar says to plant crocus on September 2, hyacinth on September 29 and spring bulbs on October 11. These are general dates and it is best to follow the directions included with any bulbs purchased. Some plant seed and bulb companies grow what they sell and can give the best advice on planting what they sell. Remember that there are bulbs for flowering at different times of the year. You should dig cannas, dahlias, glads, begonias, and tender bulbs out of the ground in the fall before planting your spring bulbs.

Flowering bulbs like daffodils, tulips, hyacinths and crocus are some of the earliest flowers to appear in gardens each year, some start to bloom as early as January. Many will bloom and multiply for years with minimal care, while others are best planted for one season's show of color. Bulbs can be planted in flower beds, in lawns, around trees, or grown in pots or window boxes.

The term "bulb" is commonly used to refer to true bulbs and other bulb-like structures such as corms, tubers, tuberous roots and stems, and rhizomes. Bulb-like structures store food to ensure the plant's survival during unfavorably cold or droughty weather.

Spring bulbs flower from late winter to early summer, depending on species. After bloom is finished, they continue to grow and store food for a period of time before dying back to ground level and becoming dormant through the summer and into fall. Spring-flowering bulbs start to grow roots again in the fall and winter to prepare for the following spring bloom. They are planted in the fall or early winter in this area. It is important to remember that you need to leave the foliage on the plant so that it can provide food for the bulb underneath and next year's flowers. Once the flower has finished blooming you should remove the spent flower and let the foliage die back on its own. Spent flowers go to seed, taking energy away from the bulb. Remove leaves only after they turn brown.

Two important things you should know about planting a bulb are to set the bulb at the right depth and to make sure you put the bulb in the hole right side up. Another tip. If you have trouble with animals digging up your bulbs in your garden plant them in wire or strawberry baskets to protect them. The plant will grow through the wire basket and the bulb will be protected from animals. *Think Spring!*

44th Annual West Virginia Total Performance Bull Sale

Thursday, March 24, 2011 is the date for the 44th Annual West Virginia Total Performance Bull Sale. The sale starts at 12:00 Noon at the WVU Reyman Memorial Farm located 2 miles North of Wardensville on SR 259. For catalogs, please call 304-472-4020 or go to <http://www.wvbeef.org/wbt/wbt.html>.

Pennsylvania Beef Expo March 24th – 27th

The Pennsylvania Beef Expo is being held March 24th – 27th at the Snider Ag Arena in State College, Pa. For more information on the Pennsylvania Beef Expo go to <http://www.pabeefexpo.com/> or www.pacattle.org. The 2011 Pennsylvania Performance-Tested Bull Sale will start at noon on Friday, March 25th at the Pa. Dept. of Ag. Livestock Evaluation Center (LEC) in Pennsylvania Furnace, PA. For more information go to <http://www.livestockevaluationcenter.com> and click on catalogs. Or contact the Expo Office Headquarters at the Livestock Evaluation Center at 814-238-2527.

Agricultural Safety Training April 5-8

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture is offering free agricultural safety training April 5 – 8, 2011 at the WVU Tree Fruit Research & Education Center in Kearneysville, WV. For a copy of the schedule and to learn what classes offer Recertification Credits for private and commercial applicators and to register, contact the West Virginia Department of Agriculture Telephone 304-558-2209 Fax 304-558-2228. You must fax or mail your registration form before March 22, 2011.

West Virginia Beef Expo April 7 - 9

The West Virginia Beef Expo will be held April 7-9 this year at the Jackson's Mill State 4-H Conference Center. For more information regarding the WV Beef Expo go to the following website:
<http://www.wvbeef.org/expo>

Farmers Tax Guide Available

For producers who want to make use of Farmers Tax Guide it is available in hard copy at the Berkeley County Extension Office and on the Web at the following location.
<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p225/index.html>

Farmer Appreciation Breakfast

The Berkeley County Farm Bureau is holding a complimentary Farmer Appreciation Breakfast on Saturday, March 19, 2011 from 7:30 am to 10:00 am at the Bill Butler Farm located on the Arden Nollville Road, Inwood. Please RSVP by March 10 by calling 304-274-3058 or 304-229-5968.

Gardening 101 Program offered

The Berkeley-Jefferson Master Gardeners will hold a Gardening 101 Workshop for beginning gardeners on Saturday, March 26, 2011 from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm at the Berkeley County youth fairgrounds located in Martinsburg. Registration for this event is closed due to reaching our goal.

Garden Tips

- Seed eggplant (indoors)
- Plant asparagus (outdoors)
- Set strawberry plants
- Seed turnips and radishes (outdoors)
- Plant rhubarb
- Fertilize asparagus and rhubarb beds

Until next time ... Until next time ...Happy Spring, Gardening, and Farming!

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