

Plant Spring Flower Bulbs in the Fall

According to the WVU Garden calendar, order spring-flowering bulbs around the end of August. Plant crocus in early September. Plant hyacinth in early October and plant spring bulbs on October 14th. Most bulbs you purchase will provide times to plant the bulbs you may purchase. Remember some bulbs flower at different times of the year. Dig bulbs like cannas, dahlias, glads, begonias and tender bulbs out of the ground in the fall before putting in the spring bulbs.

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 refers 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.

PLANTING BULBS

Bulbs grow best in full sun or part shade, but flowers will last longer if they do not receive midday sun. Most early flowering bulbs can be planted under deciduous trees since the bulbs will be going dormant by the time the trees provide heavy shade.

Good drainage is essential for spring-flowering bulbs. If drainage is a problem you can improve it by mixing 2 to 3 inches of organic matter such as shredded pine bark or compost into the beds 10 to 12 inches deep. Raised beds or drainage tiles can also help solve drainage problems.

It is best to apply fertilizer and lime according to the results of a soil test. The soil pH for most bulbs should be between 6 and 7.

Purchase bulbs while supplies are good during August or September, but wait to plant until cooler weather. Choose firm bulbs without mold or bruising. Store bulbs in a cool area below 60 °F until planting. Plant daffodils in October or November, but wait to plant other spring-flowering bulbs until the soil temperature at planting depth stays below 60 °F.

Most bulbs require a 12- to 16- week chilling period to produce flowers. Gardeners can ensure spring blooms by refrigerating bulbs in ventilated packages until planting in the fall. Avoid storing fruit near the bulbs, since fruit-produced ethylene gas can prevent blooming. When bulbs do not receive enough chilling, they bloom close to the ground, on very short stems.

In general, bulbs are planted three to four times as deep (measured from the base of the bulb) as the width of the bulb. Space bulbs in bed according to size. Large bulbs should be 3 to 6 inches apart, small bulbs 1 to 2 inches. For best appearance, plant bulbs in masses.

Cover the bed with 2 to 3 inches of mulch after planting. Mulches insulate the soil, maintain even soil moisture and prevent mud from splattering the flowers.

Normal rainfall usually provides enough moisture for spring-flowering bulbs, but in a hot or dry spring, additional water will help to prolong blooming.

PROBLEMS

Bulbs may rot in soils that stay wet for a long time. Good drainage is essential. Bulbs may stop blooming if they become overcrowded or shaded too heavily. Sparse blooms on daffodils can be caused by planting too shallowly. If leaves are cut off too soon in spring, the bulb may not store enough food to bloom the following year.

Animals often dig and eat tulip and crocus bulbs during the winter. They rarely eat daffodil bulbs. The only sure way to protect bulbs from animals is to enclose the bulbs in wire mesh when planting. Another trick is to plant bulbs in plastic containers like strawberries come it or wire baskets that the leaves can come up through.

Take time to plant spring flower bulbs now so you will have those pretty flowers in the spring.

Attention Berkeley/Jefferson County Master Gardeners

Volunteer hours were due September 30th to Mary Beth Bennett in the Berkeley County Extension Office at 400 West Stephen Street, Suite 302, Martinsburg, WV 25401. If you are a new Master Gardener who completed the educational portion of the program in 2009 please submit your hours and indicate the name you want on your name badge. Remember 30 hours of community service are required to fulfill your commitment and qualify to receive your official WV Master Gardener name badge. We will be holding our semi-annual Master Gardener Meeting on Tuesday, October 13th at the WVU Tree Fruit Research and Education Center located on Route 9 with a potluck dinner starting at 6:30 p.m. preceded by a Master Gardener Board Meeting at 5:30. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. If you have any questions feel free to contact Mary Beth Bennett at (304) 264-1936. See you October 13th if not before.

Beltsville Agriculture Research Tour - November 4th

The Forum for Rural Innovation is sponsoring a one day bus tour of the USDA Beltsville Agriculture Research Center on November 4, 2009. The tour is being planned to highlight the innovative agriculture research of plants, animals, human nutrition, and the environment. The Beltsville ARC is the largest USDA research facility in the United States, encompassing over 7,000 acres, and located at Beltsville, Maryland. It is a dynamic, highly diversified research facility, dating back to 1910. The tour will focus on agriculture industries and practices that can be implemented to our region, and highlight some of the historic research conducted at Beltsville. The tour bus will depart from Purcellville at 7:30 am and will return by 5:30 pm. All participants must pre-register and ride the bus. A \$35.00 per person registration fee will include bus transportation, snacks, and lunch. Registration is limited to 55 persons, and will be on a first-come first-served basis. Registration information is available at www.LoudounFarms.org or by calling 703-777-0426. This tour and the Forum for Rural Innovation are sponsored by the Offices of Agricultural Economic Development and Cooperative Extension -Loudoun, Fauquier, Clarke, Fredrick (VA), and Jefferson, Berkeley (WV), and the Shenandoah and Potomac Headwaters RC&D.

Western Maryland Goat Sale & Field Day, Saturday, October 3, 2009

The 2nd Annual Western Maryland Goat Field Day and Sale will be held Saturday, October 3, 2009, at the Washington County Agricultural Education Center (fairgrounds) near Boonsboro, Maryland. The fairgrounds are adjacent to the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research & Education Center. Meat goat bucks from the Western Maryland Pasture-Based Meat Goat Performance Test that meet Gold, Silver, and Bronze standards for growth, parasite resistance, parasite resilience, and minimum standards for reproductive and structural soundness will be offered for sale via public auction. This year

there are 60 goats on test. Last year, 10 out of 58 goats on test qualified for the sale. Thirty-four does have been consigned to the invitational doe sale. They include 25 fullblood, percentage and crossbred Kikos and 9 fullblood and percentage Boers. There are four yearling does and 30 doe kids. Doe consigners include ALL Boer Goats (MD), Losch's Riverview Farm Boer Goats (PA), Caprine Genetics (VA), Chey-View Acres (KY), Cedar Creek Farm (DE), and Don and Jenny Smith (VA). All of the goats will be sold via silent auction. In a silent auction, bidding is done on paper. The goats are not paraded through a sale ring. A silent auction gives bidders more time to consider their purchases. The bidding period will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The person with the highest bid at 2 p.m. gets the goat. The field day will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Dr. Richard Browning, a research animal scientist from Tennessee State University, will be the featured speaker. Dr. Browning is in the midst of conducting a multi-year breed evaluation study, comparing Boer, Kiko, and Spanish goats and their reciprocal crosses. Running concurrent to the field day will be a goat skillathon for youth, ages 8 to 18. In the skillathon, youth will be tested on their knowledge of meat, dairy, and fiber goats. Pre-registration for the skillathon is requested by September 26. Information about the skillathon can be found at <http://www.sheepandgoat.com/programs/skillathon/goatskillathon.html> Lunch will be available for purchase at the fairgrounds. Contact Susan Schoenian at (301) 432-2767 x343 or sschoen@umd.edu for information about the field day and sale and to pre-register youth for the skillathon.

MGT-332: Agriculture and Food Vulnerability Assessment Training

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), WV Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety (DMAPS), WV Department of Agriculture, and the Jefferson County Development Authority are offering free Agriculture and Food Vulnerability Assessment Training through the DHS Direct Delivery Program. This training, which has been certified and approved by DHS/FEMA, will strengthen the ability of state and local communities and industry to improve intelligence and operational capabilities for prevention and deterrence of terrorist acts that target the agriculture and food sector. This is a one and one-half day class that is open to the agriculture and food industry, federal, state, county, and local officials, extension and crop specialists, agriculture crime units, food processors, food transportation, food wholesalers and retailers, food distributors, health department officials, emergency managements agencies, meat and poultry inspection and all others involved with food and agriculture security planning.

When: November 10-11, 2009-- Beginning at 8:00 a.m. on November 10 and conclude at approximately 4:30 p.m. Class will resume at 8:00 on November 11 and conclude at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Where: West Virginia University Tree Fruit Research and Education Center 67 Apple Harvest Lane (Located On WV Route 9 in Jefferson County) Kearneysville, West Virginia 25403

Cost: No program fee. Lunch will be provided WV Law Enforcement Training Committee has approved for 12 hours law enforcement in service hours. Travel and Lodging will be the responsibility of the attendee with NO reimbursement. Registration Deadline is Wednesday November 4, 2009.

If you have any questions or require any assistance please contact Roy McCallister or Matt Blackwood, (304)-558-2214 or rmccallister@ag.state.wv.us

Garden Tips

- Plant hyacinth
- Build a high tunnel
- Dig canna, dahlia, glads and tubular begonia
- Divide perennials
- Harvest green tomatoes and gourds before frost
- Harvest late pumpkins before frost

Until next time ...Happy Gardening and Farming!