

# THE GRAPEVINE



**September 27, 2021**

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## Time to plant spring blooming bulbs

Now is the time to be thinking about spring blooms if you love Tulips, Daffodils, and Crocus. From now till the end of October is the perfect time to plant bulbs in your home flower beds. Fall planting allows the bulbs to develop roots and get the necessary chilling time to encourage blooms. When considering a location this fall remember that our bulbs need full sun to partial shade for best blooms and growth. If you have poor soil, don't worry, you can still plant bulbs with just a bit of help. Poor soils should have organic material such as peat moss, compost or aged manure added in and if you have heavy clay soils try to mix in 1/3 to 1/2 organic material.

As you plant your bulbs be sure to provide about 12" of prepared or worked soil to give the bulbs proper aeration. If one-third organic material were added, this would require mixing 4 inches of organic material with 8 inches of soil. Be sure to add in fertilizer if indicated by your soil test. You can also add in 3 pounds of a complete fertilizer such as a 5-10-5 per 100 square feet or follow the instructions on the bag.

Follow the directions when planting your bulbs to make sure you are planting them at the proper depth for the type of bulb you are working with. As a general rule bulbs are planted two to three times as deep as they are wide with smaller bulbs being planted shallower. Typically, tulip and hyacinth bulbs should be planted 6" deep while daffodils are 6-8" deep. Make sure to space the bulbs out according to the directions or 6-8" apart for large bulbs with 1-2" between smaller bulbs. As you are planting, replace 1/2 the soil then water the bulbs in. This helps the soil settle around the newly planted area and ensures good soil contact. Replace the rest of the soil and water in thoroughly. If we continue to stay dry be sure to water your bed periodically to ensure there is enough water for the root growth on the bulbs. Mulch can be added to the bed after the ground has frozen to prevent the smaller bulbs from being heaved out of the soil.



Planting bulbs is especially rewarding as those splashes of color start showing up first thing in the spring. Consider planting bulbs in large masses or large sweeps for the biggest impact or consider naturalizing an area with bulbs. Just a little work this fall can produce a big result in the early spring months.

## Fall is the ideal time to plant trees

Fall finally arrived last week, even if the weather hasn't gotten the notice yet. If you are thinking of adding a new tree to your yard, now is an excellent time for planting. Spring is probably when we most commonly think of planting trees and shrubs however the soil is often cold and may be so wet that the lack of oxygen inhibits root growth. After spring we often get the hot and windy days of summer which can further stress a newly planted tree. From early September till the end of October is an excellent time to plant trees and get them established before the ground freezes if you consider a few things.

Fall-planted trees require some special care. Remember, that roots are actively growing even though the top is dormant. Make sure the soil stays moist but not soggy. This may require watering not only in the fall but also during the winter months if we experience warm spells that dry the soil. Mulch also is helpful because it minimizes moisture loss and slows the cooling of the soil so root growth continues as long as possible.

There are some trees that will not have much root growth in the fall and these should be planted in the spring. Those trees include e beech, birch, redbud, magnolia, tulip poplar, willow oak, scarlet oak, black oak, willows, and dogwood. Make sure to buy healthy, well rooted plants and consult this publication when planting trees: [Tree Planting Guide](#)





## Bringing in the Houseplants without bringing in the bugs

Fall has arrived and several areas had overnight lows down in the 40's. It's time to start thinking about bringing any houseplants you moved outdoors back inside. Now if you want to avoid my experience one fall of coming home to tiny grasshoppers everywhere you should start now getting your plants ready to avoid bringing in hitchhikers and help your plants transition successfully.

The first step is to inspect your plants for insects and diseases. Remove any diseased or damaged leaves and any visible insects. Discard any plants that have a severe infestation to prevent the insects spreading to other plants. A strong stream of water from a garden hose will often remove most insect pests from the leaves and soaking the pot in warm water for 15 minutes should handle any insects in the soil. You could also spray your plants with insecticidal soap before bringing them inside and continue to treat plants as insect issues show up.

Along with making sure we don't bring in any hitchhikers, it is important to transition our houseplants to their new light conditions. Outside our plants are exposed to high levels of light which might not be an option inside. If possible, over the period of a week, move them to areas with less light before moving them inside. Once they are inside place them in an area with as much light as possible then slowly move them to their final winter spot. Transitioning plants to lower light levels can prevent leaf drop and yellowing, especially if you transition them slowly.

Bringing your houseplants or even annual plants inside can help save money and provide a beautiful decoration all winter. Indoor plants require less water and fertilizer during the winter months. Be sure to adjust your care as needed. Just follow a few steps to keep your plants happy and healthy in their new environment. Happy growing!!!

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