

## November 2023 Newsletter

Fall is in full swing ...

Perspective is the gift that tells us there is beauty in what we have created. It's hindsight, but through a lens of learned wisdom. It's an invitation to look up, lift our hands, and take stock of our sense of place. Where we've been, yes, but also how that plays into where we'll go. This idea gives us a whole new lens to consider the season ahead. Instead of rushing towards autumn and the routines and rhythms it brings, let's pause to take note of what perspective has to teach us. Only in reflection, it seems, do we get to make sense of what has been, to then play a part in shaping what might be.

Enjoy fall and Happy Thanksgiving ...

### **NOVEMBER MEETING:**

Date: November 8, 2023

Time: 9:30 AM - Set-up

10:00 AM - Business Meeting

10:30 AM - Social Time (Snacks and Coffee)

11:00 AM - Speaker with time for questions and answers

12:15 - 12:45 PM - Clean-up

Location: Our Savior Lutheran Church

745 Front Street South

Issaquah, WA

Program: Laura Mater KCMG from National Yard-care, Tilth Alliance will talk about Fall Yard Preparations. Come and learn how to prepare your garden to get through winter into spring with different mulches, cover crops and good fall plantings to encourage and support wildlife in the winter.

Snack Committee:

Hostess: Debbie D.

Committee: Lois, Sandra, Joy, Georgann and Deb M.

\*\*\*\*\* If you are a coffee or tea drinker please remember the **BRING YOUR OWN CUP**

Vaccination Requirement is Lifted:

After some discussion it was decided that we will lift the COVID vaccination requirement for now. As businesses and even healthcare facilities have stopped making masking and vaccinations a requirement for entry we felt that it would be challenging to enforce.

Obviously, if anyone is feeling unwell they should stay home and not attend the IGC meeting ...

### ***YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED:***

#### ***OCTOBER 11 MEETING:***

Amanda from Countryside Floral did a wonderful job demonstrating how to create a variety of floral arrangements for fall decor. She worked with a number of different sizes and shapes of containers and used many flowers and plants/foliage that many of us grow in our yards.

Questions were answered and she gave away all of the arrangements she brought with her as well as the ones she made while we watched. The program was both fun and inspiring ...

#### ***BELLEVUE BOTANICAL GARDEN WORK DAY - OCTOBER 20:***

It a perfect day for working outside ... overcast and cool. There was a good turnout. As we all know there are many garden projects that can be done this time of year and BBG is just like our yards only BIGGER. As usual the staff were very engaging and helpful ... willing to answer questions, share information and encouragement and praise for a job well done. A couple of us had just finished cleaning a bed at the base of a deciduous tree only to have a breeze blow out a bunch more leaves. We were joking with one of the employees about having just finished tidying the area when the breeze came up. He made a very politically correct comment that we can all save for use ... "I can tell as it now looks picturesque rather than messy". This fall try line on your friends next time you're showing them your yard.

### ***SAVE THE DATES:***

**November 14: Fall clean-up at the Issaquah Post Office.** A sign-up sheet and details will be available at the November Garden Club meeting.

#### **December 13: Garden Club Potluck**

Based on your last name please bring:

A-L                      Savory Treat

M-Z      Sweet Treat

## **EDUCATIONAL CORNER**

# **How to Plant and Care for Bulbs**

The time to plant bulbs is in the fall and spring—here's how to ensure a colorful garden will ensue.

The time to plant bulbs is in the fall and spring—here's how to ensure a colorful garden will ensue.

Bulbs bloom throughout the spring, summer, and even into fall, filling gardens with bright, colorful intrigue. The word bulb is an all-inclusive term that refers to a variety of underground structures, like true bulbs, tubers, and rhizomes. No matter the type, a bulb is a short stem with fleshy leaves that operates as a food-storage organ during dormancy. When growing bulbs, keep these tips in mind to create a beautiful show in your garden.

## Meet the Expert

**PeggyAnne Montgomery**, horticulturist and bulb expert for [Flowerbulbs.com](https://www.flowerbulbs.com)

**Amy Enfield**, a horticulturist for [Miracle-Gro](https://www.miracle-gro.com)

**RELATED:** [Where to Buy Flower Bulbs Online for Gorgeous Year-Round Blooms](#)

## How to Identify Quality Bulbs

Purchasing high-quality bulbs is the first step to ensuring the plants thrive in your landscape. "A high-quality bulb will be firm to the touch and relatively heavy for its size," says PeggyAnne Montgomery, horticulturist and bulb expert for [Flowerbulbs.com](https://www.flowerbulbs.com). "Any shriveled or mushy bulbs are bad and should not be planted." Also, look at the size of the bulbs—the larger they are, the more potential the bulbs have to produce more and better-quality flowers. A

small bit of mold on bulbs is perfectly normal for tulips, lilies, and bulbs, says Montgomery.

## When to Plant Bulbs

There are only two times to plant flowering bulbs: in the fall and spring. "Spring flowering bulbs are planted in the fall. Summer flowering bulbs are planted in the spring," says Montgomery. When planting in the fall, be sure to do so before the ground freezes. This gives the bulbs time to put down roots before winter. If you're planting in spring, do so once the danger of frost has passed. What zone you're living in may also dictate when you should plant bulbs.

## How to Plant Bulbs

Follow these tips when planting bulbs in your garden.

### Prepare the Soil

Before putting bulbs in the ground, [remove any weeds](#) or grass from the area. "If the [soil you are planting in is very compacted](#), it's a good idea to loosen the soil with a fork or spade—about 10 to 12 inches deep," says Montgomery. "This helps to create space for air. Plants need to extract oxygen as well as water and nutrients from the soil." Now is also a good time to add compost or shredded leaves to the soil, which helps lighten heavy soil, feed soil microbes, and provide essential plant nutrients.

## Plant Your Bulbs

While the easiest method for planting bulbs is with a bulb auger attached to a cordless drill, digging by hand works perfectly well. A good rule of thumb is to plant bulbs two to three times as deep as they are tall. "If bulbs are planted too deep, they will bloom late or not at all," says Amy Enfield, a horticulturist for [Miracle-Gro](#). "If they aren't planted deep enough, they may sprout too soon and can be damaged by cold temperatures."

Place the bulbs in the planting holes with the pointy end up and the root side down. Add a little organic bulb fertilizer to the planting hole and cover it with soil. "Mulch the area you planted in and water thoroughly," says Montgomery.

## How to Grow Bulbs in Containers

Bulbs can also be [grown in containers](#). It's best to do so in larger pots because there is more soil to insulate the bulbs. "If it doesn't freeze much in your area, you can get away with putting them in a sheltered spot outside covered with a pile of leaves," says Montgomery. "You can also try putting them in an unheated garage if they won't freeze solid."

Give containers added intrigue by planting bulbs in layers. Plant the biggest bulbs at the bottom of the container, adding a layer of soil and planting the next level. "For instance—from the bottom up—tulips, daffodils, muscari, crocus, snowdrops," says Montgomery. "That way, the container has something blooming for many weeks."

## How to Care for Bulbs

Knowing how to care for bulbs will ensure an abundant display come growing season.

### Sun

Bulbs typically need at least [six hours of direct sun per day](#). "Remember that in springtime, deciduous trees and shrubs don't have their leaves yet, and the early flowering bulbs may get more sun than the same area does in the summer," says Montgomery.

### Water

Water the planting area thoroughly after planting. "Keep the soil moist but not overly saturated until the ground freezes," says Enfield. During fall, normal rainfall is typically enough for bulbs after their initial watering, but if you're having a dry spell, additional watering may be necessary, says Montgomery. "For spring-planted,

summer-flowering bulbs, strive for about 1 inch a week," she says.

## Soil

Like most plants, bulbs prefer well-drained soil rich in organic matter, says Montgomery. You can also [amend the soil with compost](#) if it's lacking nutrients.

## Mulch

Unless you planted bulbs in the lawn or in a [rock garden](#), adding mulch is beneficial. "Mulch helps keep the bulb uniformly cold," says Montgomery. It also helps slow weed growth by cutting off the light they need.

## How to Arrange Bulbs

Bulbs are best planted in large drifts. "The more you plant together the better they show up and make a real impression in the landscape," says Montgomery. "More is definitely better and it's ok to plant them pretty close together—when I plant bulb lawns I plant them just a few inches apart." Planting in large drifts will also give your landscape a more natural appearance and will [attract more pollinators](#).

## How to Keep Rodents Away From Bulbs

One downside of bulbs is that they sometimes attract unwanted animals. "Squirrels tend to dig in any disturbed soil (the soil you just disturbed to plant the bulbs) and can dig the bulbs out of the ground even if they don't eat them," says Montgomery. To prevent this from happening, cover the area with chicken wire and stake it down. "There are small wire cages you can buy to put the bulbs in when you plant them or make your own with inexpensive chicken wire." Additionally, you can cover bulbs with gravel or crushed rock or buy repellents to keep garden pests away.

## How to Overwinter Bulbs

Some bulbs or tubers like dahlias, begonias, cannas, and some gladiolus are not hardy in most parts of the country and need to be dug up and stored indoors for winter, says Montgomery. "The advantage is you get more and bigger bulbs (tubers) in return and save a little money. One dahlia tuber could be divided into two or three plants," she says.

Cut the stem off a few inches above the ground. Use a shovel or pitchfork to carefully loosen the soil and lift the tuber. (They will be much bigger than what you planted.) Shake off all of the soil, then gently rinse off the tubers. Examine the tubers and cut out any rotten parts.



Let the tubers dry in an area with good air circulation and low light.

Place the tubers in plastic crates, cardboard boxes, or paper bags. Store them in a dark, well-ventilated area where they won't freeze.

Check on them during the winter and remove any tubers that are rotting.