

Bulbs, Beets, and Bare Roots

A Master Gardener's Guide to Fall





Step #1!

Soil test! Two available to us very easily!

* Free at Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 123 Huntington Street, New Haven CT. Basic information about your soil: pH, levels of P and K and general recommendations.

* \$15 Test at the UConn Soil Test Laboratory! Includes levels of heavy metals including lead, also less general and more information



Soil Tests continued

- pH in soil should be in the 6.2 to 7 range unless you are growing hydranges, blueberries, Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Mountain Laurel, anything Ericaceous.
- Organic matter should be above 10% but no higher than 50%.
- Nitrogen is generally not a large factor in the equation because it is so mutable in water
- Know your soil!
- Look for the infamous jumping worm.
- Look for voles, moles, etc.



♥ While we are on the subject of varmints



Squirrels are a major problem for bulbs EXCEPT Daffodils (Narcissus species). They will dig Crocus, eat Tulip petals and cause mayhem in the garden beds!

♥ Also problems in the garden!

- Chipmunks
- Jumping Worms
- Groundhogs
- Deer
- Rabbits



Suggestions/solutions

- “Release the hounds!”
- Maine Coon Cat
- Pest repellents - mixed results
- Air rifle, pellet gun?
- Water pistol with ammonia
- Install chicken wire/hardware cloth over bulb plantings
- Any suggestions from the audience?

Planting bulbs!



Tulips!

Like most bulbs, are native to the Middle East. Hybrids are subject to fungal problems after the second or third year, so are not truly perennial. Species tulips (*T. turkestanica*) are reliably perennial. Protect from varmints!

Plant in fall, spread bone meal. Plant $2\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 times the depth of the bulb

♥ Tulips continued

- *Come in many colors except blue!
- * Plant in well-drained soil
- *Squirrels will dig up bulbs, eat the petals
- *Great cut flower
- *Look for early, mid- and late season varieties
- *Many forms to consider



Daffodils/narcissus

- *Reliably hardy!**
- *Deer proof!**
- *Squirrels might take an exploratory chew but nothing more**
- *Do not plant in boggy wet soil**
- *Many colors in the hot range**
- *Look for early, mid- and late season varieties**



Minor bulbs!

- *Crocus
- *Eranthus
- *Snow-drops
- *MANY Alliums
- *Fritillarias -mole repellent!
- *Fall blooming crocus- gives us safron!



Eranthis Snowdrops



Fritillaria



Alliums



The earlier they bloom, the earlier in the fall you should plant. ie Crocus should be in the ground very soon, tulips and daffodils to Thanksgiving.

Vegetables!

- **Root crops are just past for sowing seed: carrots, beets, etc.**
- **Greens? Yes, reap as ye sow! Choose varieties especially of lettuce that are winter-growing types.**
- **Garlic? Coming up but WAIT till after one killing frost, usually mid- to late November now for us**
- **Row covers are very helpful**

Vegetables continued!

- **Limiting factor is no longer temperature for fall planting: but sunlight**
- **Leafy greens need 6 hours/day, root crops 8+ and fruiting vegetables (like tomatoes) 10+**
- **Have soil tested!**
- **pH around 6.5 to 7**
- **Feed your soil, not your vegetables; organic forms of N are best as they don't burn soil microorganisms**

Lawns

- * Bit late for seeding but still possible
- * Aerify: bring plugs of soil, lawn and thatch up
- * De-thatch lawn: a machine with blades that cut and bring to the surface anything laying horizontal.
- * Remove dead grass, fertilize with 1 to 1 and 1/2 lb. N/1000 square feet.
- * In subsequent years, cut lawn at 3 inches and do not remove clippings
- * Avoid no mow May.



Woody Plants!

- Do NOT prune woody plants: it encourages a flush of growth that is more frost-prone
- Do not mulch till after first frost
- Discontinue dead-heading roses
- Do NOT fertilize woody plants (see pruning above)
- Plant for fall color and flower
- Chop leaves of trees and return them to the drip line of the tree.

♥ Fall blooming!

- Camellia sasanqua (?)
- Witch-hazel
- Fall-blooming Cherry
- Crocus sativus - the Saffron crocus
- Asters
- Golden-rods
- Roses...into November!



Autumn color!

- Sugar Maples-the King! or Queen!
- Sweet Gum
- Sour Gum
- Sour wood
- Blueberries
- Itea
- Fothergilla
- Dogwood

Non-native

- Stewartia
- Japanese Maple
- Aspen (near native?)
- Sumac

Fruit!

- Apples #1 Fall fruit (peaches, apricots, plums in summer
- Pears
- Fall-producing raspberries (everbearing canes)
- The wonderful Pawpaw!



Pawpaw

- Choose a self-pollinating variety: Sunflower or similar
- Morning sun, afternoon shade
- Have early spring flowering plants nearby to attract pollinators
- Keep squirrels away with Bonide Repels-All Animal Repellent
- Eat Fresh or make ice cream, jam or preserves



Winter interest





THANK YOU

- Keep smiling.....
- There's ***always*** something
- A bad day in the garden is better than the best day at work