

Horticulture 2023 Newsletter

No. 37 September 19, 2023

1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Cntr.
Manhattan, KS 66506 (785) 532-6173

Video of the Week: [Planting Bulbs for Spring Color](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Kansas Forest Service Tree, Shrub Seedling Sale](#), September 1 - October 15

REMINDERS

- Divide perennials such as peonies and daylilies, if needed.
- Prune broken and dead branches from trees.
- Remove suckers and watersprouts from fruit trees.

ORNAMENTALS

Time to Plant Spring-flowering Bulbs Approaching



Spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils and crocus can be planted from now through October giving bulbs time to establish roots before the required chilling period during winter months.

Choose an area with full sun to part shade. Ideally the soil should be a sandy loam, but if not, it can be amended by adding compost to a depth of at least one-foot. Incorporate fertilizer based on a soil test or use a 5-10-5 at a rate of three pounds per 100 square feet. The soil pH should be between 6.0 and 7.0.

Determine the planting depth based on the bulb size. Planting depth refers to the distance from the bottom of the hole, where the base of the bulb will rest, to the surface of the soil once the hole is backfilled. Bulbs the size of tulips and hyacinths are typically planted six-inches deep while daffodil-size bulbs should be six- to eight-inches deep. In general, bulbs should be planted two to three times as deep as their width. Space large bulbs four- to six-inches apart. Small bulbs can be spaced one- to two-inches apart. Mass plantings create a more aesthetically-pleasing display when spring blooms emerge.

Backfill each hole halfway and water in to settle the soil. Replace the remaining soil and water again. Though you will not see above-ground growth in the fall, roots are still growing. Keep the soil moist and add mulch after the soil freezes to provide insulation and prevent bulbs from being heaved out of the soil. (Cynthia Domenghini)

VEGETABLES

Adding Organic Materials Directly to the Garden



Organic matter can aid in replenishing almost any type of soil. It improves tilth, aeration and water absorption of clay soil. In sandy soils, it acts as a sponge by holding water and nutrients. Adding organic materials gathered in the landscape directly to the garden is an easy and inexpensive way to enjoy these benefits.

Materials such as grass clippings (untreated), leaves, old mulch and straw are some examples of organic matter that can improve the soil. Shred large materials using a mower or other tool so they will decompose more quickly. Spread a layer about three-inches thick over the surface of the garden. Till or dig in the organic matter on a day when the soil is not saturated. Warm weather will expedite decomposition and this process can be repeated every other week into November or December when the cold slows decomposition significantly. (Cynthia Domenghini)

MISCELLANEOUS

Reblooming Poinsettias



Photoperiodism, the amount of light or dark a plant is exposed to, affects the bloom of most plants. Some plants need longer periods of darkness and are known as “short-day” plants. Others require fewer dark hours, “long-day” plants.

Many summer flowers and vegetables are in the long-day category. Chrysanthemums, Christmas cactus and poinsettias fall in the short-day category. These plants require at least 12 hours of darkness every 24 hours in order to bloom. Growers can force blooming by controlling the light and dark periods.

If you have poinsettias from last year, follow these steps to encourage blooms in time for the holidays.

- For no more than 12 hours each day, keep poinsettias in an area where they will receive the brightest light possible. Temperatures should be kept between 65- and 75-degrees F.
- Provide at least 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness to the plants every 24 hours. If a completely dark room or closet is not available, place a cardboard box over the top of the poinsettias. Be sure to seal the openings of the box with duct tape to prevent light from entering. 60- to 65-degrees F is the ideal nighttime temperature to promote blooming.

Continue the dark treatment for six weeks until buds have set. Within another two to five weeks poinsettias should be blooming. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Planting Trees in the Fall



Fall can be a great time to plant trees and take advantage of the root growth that can occur while the soil is still warm before freezing begins. This gives trees a head start enabling them to endure spring growth and summer stress. Early September to late October is the ideal planting time for most trees. Some trees are not good candidates for fall planting such as beech, birch, redbud, magnolia, tulip poplar, willow oak, scarlet oak, black oak, willows and dogwood. These trees will not be able to establish roots in time to survive the winter.

Newly planted trees require some care even when the above-ground growth is dormant. The soil should remain moist so roots do not dry out. A layer of mulch can be beneficial for regulating soil temperature and reducing water loss. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Moving Houseplants Inside for the Winter



With some relief from hot weather this week and colder temps on the way, it's time to turn our attention to protecting cold-sensitive plants. Some gardeners move houseplants outdoors to bask in the summer heat and recover from the stress of an indoor environment. Planning for their reentry to the house is important so houseplants have time to adjust to the changes in growing conditions.

Before bringing any plants indoors, check thoroughly for pests. Small populations of insects, such as mites and aphids, can be dislodged by spraying the foliage with a hose. If the insects are found in the soil, soak the entire container in lukewarm water for 15 minutes. Plants with a heavy infestation may be better off discarded.

Once moved indoors, continue to monitor for pests to prevent spreading throughout the house. Plant growth will slow substantially indoors and will therefore require less water and fertilization. Most houseplants will benefit from receiving water only when the soil surface is dry. Fertilization will likely not be necessary until spring.

It is best to help plants adjust to the lower light conditions indoors gradually to prevent leaf drop. Initially, place plants near windows with the brightest light. Over several weeks move the plants further away until they've reached the desired location. Supplemental lighting can be provided with grow lights. Avoid cold drafts from doors and windows and heat from air vents. These extremes can put plants under stress.

Many houseplants come from tropical locations and favor humid conditions. Kitchens and bathrooms tend to be more humid areas inside the home. If space and lighting permits, this may

be a good location for your plants. You can increase humidity for your plants by using a humidifier or grouping multiple plants together creating a microclimate. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Root Cellars



Root cellars are a time-tested solution for storing the harvest surplus through winter. The temperature and humidity underground can provide favorable conditions for certain vegetables. Traditionally, onions, garlic, turnips, carrots and potatoes are stored in cellars. However, many types of fruits, squash, nuts and other vegetables can successfully be stored as well. Here are a few tips to increase the shelf-life of your harvest.

- Store fruits separate from vegetables to avoid ethylene exposure to vegetables.
- Turnips, cabbage and other vegetables with a strong odor may transmit this to nearby produce
- See the chart below for recommended storage conditions for specific produce. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Temperature (degrees F)	Humidity (%)	Produce
32-35	60-70	garlic, onions
32-40	80-90	apples, grapes, oranges, pears
32-40	90-95	beets, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, horseradish, artichoke, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, parsnips, radish, rutabaga, turnips
32-50	60-70	dry beans and peas
38-40	80-90	potatoes
50-55	60-75	pumpkins, winter squash
above 50	80-90	sweet potatoes, tomatoes

Contributors:

Cynthia Domenghini, Instructor
 Ward Upham, Extension Associate

Division of Horticulture
 1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton
 Manhattan, KS 66506
 (785) 532-6173

For questions or further information, contact: cdom@ksu.edu, wupham@ksu.edu OR cdipman@ksu.edu

This newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web at:

<http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

The web version includes color images that illustrate subjects discussed. To subscribe to this newsletter electronically, send an e-mail message to cdipman@ksu.edu or wupham@ksu.edu listing your e-mail address in the message.

Brand names appearing in this newsletter are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision or hearing disability, or a dietary restriction please contact Extension Horticulture at (785) 532-6173.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Ernie Minton, Dean