

All Gardens
Great & Small
by
York Co.
Horticultural Agent
Tom Becker



PLANTING BULBS 'October Has 21 Fair Days'

American Folklore

Fall is for planting trees, shrubs, and bulbs. Use this month of October to visit gardens, parks and to make your flowering bulb selections. Select your bulbs based on type (variety), colors and size. Be sure to buy enough of each color and type for a good display in your garden. Use them for naturalized plantings, garden accents, landscape borders, rock gardens, or container gardens. Force for indoor bloom or as cut flowers.

Let's escape from the ordinary. The well-known crocus, hyacinth, narcissus, and tulips are all favorites, but many other lesser-known

bulbs are available. No matter what you select for planting this fall, make sure the bulbs are disease-free. Diseased bulbs look moldy, discolored, or soft and rotted. Bulbs should always be firm with unblemished skin. If you buy bulbs now, keep them in a cool, dry place. Temperatures higher than 70° will damage the flower buds inside the bulbs.

Try some of the little bulbs such as crocus, snowflakes, snowdrops or winter aconite. Also called Galanthus, a snowdrop will show its small frosty-white, bell-like flowers in the very early spring. Pearl-like buds are protected by long green leaves when a snow and frost are still heavy. Watch for

them even before the crocus bloom.

Another small bulb-type which is easily mistaken for blue bells is the scilla. Late-blooming scilla is also called Spanish bluebells. Woodland plantings are preferred but scilla also look good in border plantings or as a wildflower for a naturalized garden area.

All spring bulbs are easy to plant. Place bulbs in a hole two to three times as deep as the diameter of the bulb. Soil at the bottom of the bed should be loosened and a fertilizer added, such as bone meal or one high in phosphorus, calcium, and magnesium.

Plant the bulbs firmly in soil with the pointed end up in mid-late fall. Then fill the bed with soil and water thoroughly. Finally mulch and water thoroughly again.

In the spring, as soon as the shoots begin to emerge, fertilize with a high nitrogen and potassium fertilizer. When the blooming period is over, let the foliage die naturally so that the food reserves from the leaves will be transported down to the developing roots.

If you plan your spring bulbs planting carefully, you can have a continuous bloom period from March through the end of June.

Try interplanting the smaller bulb types with tulips and daffodils. Then, as the little bulbs fade, the reds, blues, golds and bi-colors of the larger blooming flowers will take their place.

Lastly, use a layer of mulch to protect the emerging bulbs. A light or medium weight mulch

made of compost, pine needles, bark or straw, will protect your bulbs from "heaving" out of the soil.

Questions relating to this article can be sent to Tom Becker, Extension Agent Horticulture, 112 Pleasant Acres Rd., York, PA 17402-9041.

State Recognizes Pennsylvania Farm Women's Vital Role

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)

The House of Representatives unanimously adopted a resolution sponsored by Rep. Sheila Miller (R-Berks) to recognize the vital role farm women have played in preserving and enriching Pennsylvania's agricultural and rural heritage. House Resolution 515 designates October 14, as "Farm Women's Day" in Pennsylvania.

"Agriculture is our Commonwealth's number one industry. Whether driving a tractor or caring for livestock, farm women are members of the vital team that puts food on the plates of every Pennsylvanian every day," said Miller. "The current economic situation for farmers today, with commodity prices falling and challenging the stability of our family farms, our farm women are called on more than ever before to hold the family together."

The contributions of Pennsylvania's farm women and the Society of Farm Women are deserving of special recognition and appreciation, noted Miller, a member of the Society. "I am proud to have sponsored this resolution and encourage everyone to take time October 14 to honor the hard-working members of the Farm Women Societies across the state," Miller said.

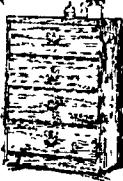
The Society of Farm Women, 2,772 members strong and with 159 societies throughout the commonwealth, has been a leader in promoting Pennsylvania agriculture since its inception in 1914. Pennsylvania has more rural residents than any other state in the nation. Forty-seven of the commonwealth's 67 counties, including Berks County, are predominantly rural.

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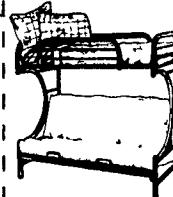
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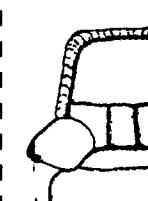
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