



Allium 'Globe Master'

Fall and Winter 2010

Petite Gardenscapes

Sensible designs for the weekend gardener

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Bodacious Bulbs

I know you decided last spring that you wished you had planted more bulbs last fall- that time has come 'round again.

On page 3, Elizabeth will tell you about adding **alliums** to your garden beds for some serious pops of color and shapes for summer and fall. I have a **new best bulb** that really performed well this past May, and we all can enjoy the wide array of luscious shades that **tulips** come in- and they also come in three bloom seasons as well, early, mid-season and late.

If you want to try some of these beauties that will jazz up your garden, you can order them through me when I place my order September 23rd (remember first day of Autumn) through my wholesale bulb companies. Then, when they arrive, I'll deliver them to you with planting instructions, or if you can't plant them yourself, you can hire me to do the work.

My new favorite bulb is the Camassia or Quamash, a native bloomer that catches the eye in deep blue (Camassia leicthlinii Caerulea) with a height of 24-30 ".



angliablossoms.com

and Camassia 'Blue Heaven' (with the sky blue blossoms below). They bloom in late May and the blooms last about 3 weeks.



Height- 15-20 in.

Try some new tulips in 3 seasons: Early, Mid, and Late. With full sun and good drainage, they'll reward you with color and beauty for years to come.



Early- 'Beauty Queen ' 16"



Mid-'Yonina' 16"



Late- 'Dordogne' 26"

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Timely Tip
Now is the best time (until mid-September) to reseed or patch your lawn. Cool night temperatures and autumn rainfalls jumpstart new grass. Try one of the new seed kits that let you know when its time to water again.



To Clear or Not to Clear

One of the questions I am asked frequently as a “garden expert” is whether or not to clean your garden in the fall. It’s a good question and I’ve had to answer YES and NO. Okay, *what* now? The issue is what’s healthy for your garden, and for you.

In the **YES** camp:

Clearing away plant debris that might infect your future garden- rose leaves with Black Spot, iris foliage that is harboring the nasty Iris Borer, or Botrytis Blight on your peonies or other perennials. Get that stuff cleared out of there and DON’T put it in your compost heap, unless you have a hot compost heap going. To be safe, just don’t compost it.

Black Spot



Apps.rhs.org

Iris Borer



mobot.org

Botrytis Blight on Peony



Ksda.gov

And that Powdery Mildew on phlox plants. Now that’s just icky- Cut those sad-looking plants to the ground.

How much is enough to clear the garden?

I always cut down to about 4 inches, and leave about 6 inches of one stalk remaining. That way, if I’m putting in new plants in the springtime, I’ll know there’s a perennial there even if it is a late starter.

In the **NO** camp:

Leaving flower stalks standing that will provide winter interest. We’re approaching it, gardeners, that dull time of looking out your window at acres of White Nothingness. If you had planted some small evergreens in your garden beds and borders, you’d have something green to look at. Ok, that’s for next spring. In the meantime, leave some grasses waving in the winter winds, and let those Autumn Joy Sedum flowerheads provide some architectural interest and variety to the landscape.



Gardeningtipsnideas.com

And feeding the birds! Leaving seedheads on your perennials stalks will not only provide a much needed source of food for the birds which hang around all winter, but provide YOU with entertainment watching them feed.

Two examples, Coneflower and Monarda (Beebalm) are common summer flowers in our gardens and will make the bird population very happy. So, sit back and put your feet up- some of the work CAN be put off until Spring! Better yet, add some exciting new bulbs to your beds.



Justtwofarmkids.com



Allium Must-haves

by Elizabeth O'Connell, *Ozaukee Gardener*

It's a sad fact of life that if bulbs are to burst into spring flowers the blasted things have to be planted when sensible gardeners are ready to put up their feet and relax. But autumn is the time to plant bulbs. One of the most under-utilized is the Allium or Ornamental Onion. With a little planning these versatile bulbs can grace your garden from spring until frost with flowers in all sizes, shapes and colors.

My first Allium came from my neighbor. I was captivated by the airy silver-lilac globes floating 18 inches above his garden border and trotted home with a plant in a spade full of soil and a warning that "Star of Persia" (*Allium christophii*) spreads everywhere." Of course, with the perverse irony that plagues gardeners, it's taken me years to cultivate even a small patch of 'Star of Persia' in my backyard. By the time my second starry globe finally appeared I'd already taken the plunge and purchased several other Allium varieties.

Provided with adequate moisture and full sun, Alliums are carefree plants. Insects and pests like deer, voles, rabbits and chipmunks find Alliums unpalatable because of sulfur compounds that give the crushed leaves their characteristic scent of onion. Allium flowers may be large globes, pendulous clusters or small pompoms colored white, blue, yellow or shades of purple. I fancy globes myself, the taller and more outrageous the better. 'Globemaster' (see Page 1) lines the back of one border. Its six-inch diameter purple balls top 48-inch stems and stand tall despite rain and wind. *Allium giganteum* provides an even more impressive display with ten-inch flowers on stiff 60-inch stems.

Large flowered Allium blossoms last for weeks and can also be dried to use in arrangements. They emerge from the soil in a huge mound of strappy foliage and send up multiple flower stalks when mature. It's best to grow them behind mounding plants like upright sedum since the Allium foliage fades not long after the flowers set seed. As I learned the first time mine bloomed, huge gaps develop in a garden if you don't plan ahead.

Be warned - Alliums can be pesky self-sowers if they aren't deadheaded promptly.



vanbloem.com

More petite selections extend the Allium season from spring into high summer. *Allium azureum* or Blue Drumstick (above) is only a foot tall but produces one-and-a-half-inch pompoms of pure blue in July. This North American native has fine foliage that resembles garden chives. Mine contrast nicely with a clump of nearby white dianthus that blossoms at the same time.



pottertons.co.uk

Another favorite is *Allium mollis* or Golden Garlic. The ten-inch tall plants produce one-inch bursts of yellow stars in late May. *Allium roseum*, blooming at the same time, sports small pink umbels. Both plants self-sow freely if the spent flowers aren't removed. One Allium in our garden is just getting ready to begin flowering.



beautifulbotany.com

'Ozawa' (*Allium thunbergii* 'Ozawa' (above)) sends up showers of small pink flowers above 10-inch mounds of greenery in late September and the display will continue until frost. 'Ozawa' is a good companion for vibrant short asters like 'Purple Dome.'

Easy-care Alliums add an unexpected architectural element to the spring garden and with smart planning you can enjoy their flowers all season. Not many gardeners are eager to do more than gather up the leaves when autumn arrives. But put down your rake for a few moments this fall and plant some Alliums. It's a fast and easy way to improve your 2011 garden.



GOOD CO_mP_{ost}-BAD CO_mP_{ost}

We all hear that compost is a good thing for our gardens, right? It's simply a matter of putting brown garden waste (carbon) and green garden waste (nitrogen) together and waiting until it looks kind of like black stuff. Right?



Well, commercial herb grower Peter Garnham begs to differ. He'll tell you that the difference between good compost and bad can be whether your plants do well or whether they die!

Before you shovel your next batch of compost onto your garden beds, check this out. Peter says **maturity** is the key word in good compost. When you compost heap is mixed together, you get microbial activity going on, and heat builds up. Just because the pile has stopped heating is not an accurate sign that the compost is finished.

A Solviata test kit will tell you if your compost is finished, but because it's pricey, you may want to emulate Peter who did an experiment that you can easily replicate: take four small flower pots, filling three of them with samples of your compost. Fill the fourth with seed starting mix or potting soil. Plant 10 radish seeds in each pot. If you get 10 radish seeds sprouting in your potting soil or seed starter, and only one or two in your compost, your compost isn't ready yet. Don't put it on your garden until it's matured.

I have acorn squash growing in two of my garden beds now because the worm castings from my worm farm still had viable seeds in it. I don't think I'll be harvesting squash this fall, but it's a sobering reminder of what's in compost that you may be inadvertently adding to your garden.

If you spray toxic pesticides and fungicides on your lawns, plants or trees, DO NOT add those cuttings to your compost heap. You can't depend on the composting process to destroy the toxins. Be especially careful if you are putting compost on crops grown for food.

Finally, that brings me to a concern-accepting free composting materials without knowing what they are composed of strikes me as dangerous. Having cut down a tree with Black Knot (a fungus capable of affecting trees in the plum or cherry family) I worried that if I put the tree on the curb, the city would chip the tree and homeowners would take the free mulch from the city yard and spread the fungus on their beds, borders, and paths. The only safe ways to dispose of the diseased tree were to bury it or burn it.

As gardeners, you have probably noticed that global warming is affecting the lifespan of pests in our area. Temperatures are not dropping enough to eradicate some of the pests that once were frost or winter killed. While we can't change that, knowledge is power. Stay informed and educated on local gardening issues that affect your garden.

Fungus Gnats

As we get ready to bring in our houseplants for the winter months, let's let those pesky fungus gnats party til they drop, using this method:

Buy a cheap bottle of alcohol-free wine (Trader Joe's has a \$2 version). Pour some into a small saucer and place near an infected plant. The next morning you should find a large number of dead gnats. Discard, refill and let the party continue until you no longer see the gnats. Now this only works for adults (appropriate, no?) The eggs laid by those adult gnats are in the soil of your plants, and if you remove the top two inches, replacing with sand (no organic matter) and let the soil below dry out, you will not only keep the eggs from hatching but the adults from laying their eggs in the sand. It's best to treat all infected houseplants at once to stop this problem for good.



Protecting Bulbs by Elizabeth O'Connell, Ozaukee Gardener

Munching deer, voles and chipmunks have turned more than one gardener against spending hours in the autumn planting bulbs. At the end of the season when you are tired of gardening it's hard to make the effort to dig and plant if critters eat up your investment before they produce flowers.

There are a couple of ways to defeat the hungry hordes. The first is to plant tasty bulbs like tulips, crocus, hyacinths and lilies in wire boxes. A material like chicken wire that has large enough openings to permit bulb shoots to emerge but small enough to keep out critters is an ideal and inexpensive material.

Dig out an area large enough and deep enough for a cluster of 5 or 7 bulbs and add bulb fertilizer. Then make a box or round container to contain the bulbs. It doesn't have to be perfect or beautiful - just be sure all of the edges are tightly closed by weaving the cut edges of the mesh together.

Fit the container into the planting hole. Arrange the bulbs in the box and fill it with soil. Then take another piece of chicken wire and create a top for the planting box. Be sure to secure it in place with wire ties, "sew" the top on with a piece of the thin guide wire that's on the edge of the mesh roll, or weave the cut ends of the wire mesh together. This will prevent the critters from opening the box if they dig in the area.

Then fill in the hole the same as with any other planting. Remember to divide the boxed bulbs regularly. They'll be easy to find in the box and there isn't as much chance you'll damage the bulbs when digging them up or putting in other plants. But do remember to divide boxed bulbs regularly since crowded bulbs can grow into the mesh.

All this work protects the bulbs themselves but foragers like deer will still eat the foliage and flowers once they pop out of the soil. Hoops can protect blossoms from small animals like rabbits

but if deer are the problem it's better to skip the extra labor and plant unpalatable plants.

There are many possibilities that will still give you a wonderful display.



visionmena.com

Narcissus (which includes daffodils) (above) of all kinds and hyacinths are high in alkaloids, bitter toxins. Deer and other wildlife will not eat the flowers, foliage or the bulbs of the plants (the toxins are concentrated in the bulbs). This is one of the reasons daffodils are popular bulbs for public plantings.

Other bulbs like Fritillaria (i.e. Crown Imperials (below), Checkered lilies, Ivory bells)



pacificbulbsociety.org

have a skunky odor from both the bulb and flower that repel critters. These bulbs should be planted in areas at least 30 feet from house windows and doors. Spring weather, however, may be cool enough "Eau d' Pepe le Pew" floating through open windows won't be an issue.

Alliums or Ornamental Onions have sulfur compounds and a pungent taste unpopular with wildlife and insects. Alliums produce showy blossoms in a variety of colors, sizes and shapes. And unlike other bulbs which flower in spring or early summer, there are Alliums that will provide a display from April until frost.

So if you're ready to make a spring statement, forget the tulips and try something unusual. A few minutes of work this autumn can yield a bounty of flowers for your garden - without providing a meal for any of the local wildlife.



Bringing plants In

You bought plants that aren't zone hardy, and you can't bear to let them freeze, so follow these tips to make them more likely to survive til Spring .

Transition gradually- You'll see leaf drop which can look pretty awful if you bring a plant in too quickly. Move the pot to a shadier location for a week or two before bringing indoors.

Give your plants a good inspection and a **shower** to leave the pests outdoors.

Repot the plants in **fresh potting soil** (see recipes for your own mix to the right) and an appropriate size container.

Trim it up. While clearing out plant detritus, give it a haircut. Your plant can conserve energy and the size will fit your home more easily.

Give the plant a **rest**- stop fertilizing until spring, let the soil dry out a bit, but add humidity (which the plants need to discourage pests) by misting the leaves.

Potting Soil Construction

If you're bringing plants inside for the winter, or just giving your plants a fresh batch of soil, consider making your own healthy mix. Below are recipes for a basic mix, and for special mixes for different types of plants. If you start now, while the weather is still good, you can mix it outdoors in a wheelbarrow or cart. The garden stores also still have these items in stock, If you're like me, you'll be doing this in December, trying to find the ingredients and making a mess of the kitchen counter. Whenever you make it, you're giving your plants nutrients and improving the drainage in those containers.

Basic Mix

1 part peat moss
1 part perlite
1 part compost (either your own or purchased)
1 part good garden soil or purchased potting soil
Optional "throw-ins": a handful of Soybean meal
Kelp meal
(Some recipes add lime and phosphate, but we don't need that here in Wisconsin)
Mix these together and use a screen to sift out the big chunks you might find.

Succulent Mix

5 parts perlite
4 parts bagged potting soil
1 part coarse sand
Pinch of rock dust
When watering your succulents, increase acidity by adding 1 T white vinegar to 5 gallons of water. They'll thank you for it.

Tropical plants in general want loose, acidic well-drained soil that's high in organic material.

Tropical Soil Mix

Step One

Mix 2 parts composted bark
2 parts pure pine bark
1 part rice hulls
1 handful carcoal pellets

Then combine:

3 parts of above mix
1 part peat moss
1 part perlite
1 part calcined clay

And finally, for your potted annuals. The nutrients in this will keep you from having to frequently fertilize.

Annual Mix

1 part expanded slate
1 part composted chicken manure
1 part worm castings
1 part composted pine bark
1 part coarse river sand

Use this next mix to feed your plants in the hypertufa containers. Alpine plants don't want or need organic matter.

Alpine Mix

1 part expanded slate or shale
1 part bagged potting soil (no synthetic fertilizer added)
1 part bagged playground sand

Mulch the surface of the soil with grit or small pebbles to keep the plant crowns from rotting.



Garden Terrors

Garden phobias seem appropriate as we approach Halloween season. I have been a victim of arachnophobia (fear of spiders) in the past, but I've learned to tolerate them in the garden as many of them do a great job of eating pests. However, here are some other phobias that keep folks out of the garden, and a light-hearted approach to possible antidotes to these fears



allaboutfrog.org

Abthophobia- Fear of flowers (Grow only vegetables, and don't let them go to seed.)

Rupophobia- Fear of dirt (garden gloves?)

Botanophobia- Fear of plants (ok, no live solution there- plastic ?)

Scoleciphobia- Fear of worms (hire someone to till your soil-no vermicomposting for you.)

Seplophobia- Fear of decaying matter (no composting either)

Insectophobia- Fear of flies and other insects (get someone else to garden and admire from indoors)

Ranidaphobia- Fear of frogs (don't go near the water, Sara!)

Lachanophobia- Fear of vegetables (grow only flowers, and remember, the tomato is a fruit!)

Ordering Information:

To order any of the recommended bulbs in this edition, select from the following. **Prices are for 5 or 10**

Botanic Name	5 bulbs	10 bulbs
Allium 'Blue Drumstick'	\$ 2.25	4.50
Allium 'Globemaster'	\$46.00	90.00
Alium mollis 'Jeanine'	\$ 2.50	5.00
Camassia lechtlinii caerulea	\$ 7.00	14.00
Camassia 'Blue Heaven'	\$12.00	24.00
Fritillaria rubra	\$35.00	70.00
Tulipa 'Beauty Queen'	\$ 7.00	14.00
Tulipa 'Dordogne'	\$ 5.00	10.00
Tulipa 'Yonina'	\$ 5.25	10.50

******Since Allium 'Ozawa' blooms in the fall, we can't order or plant at this time. Let me know if you want 'Ozawa' and I will purchase them for you in the spring.******

********If you have a bulb in mind that **isn't** listed here, let me know how many you would want and I will inform you promptly if I can get it and what your cost would be.********

Please contact me by email pbaganz@yahoo.com or phone - 262-353-6555 by September 23 (first day of Autumn) when I will be placing the order. I will bill you when the bulbs arrive. You can let me know when you order if you will be planting them yourself or want me to do the work.