



NEWS COLUMN

Mona Kaiser, Master Gardener
WSU Grant-Adams Area Extension
Courthouse, PO Box 37, Ephrata WA 98823
(509) 754-2011, ext 413

Planting and Care of Tender Bulbs Dahlias, Lilies, and Gladiolus

Dahlias, lilies and gladiolus will add a wonderful array of color to your flower beds and make excellent cut flowers. You will have a broad selection of flower shapes and color to choose from. Choose solid, healthy bulbs. Some bargain bulbs are not worth the price, no matter how inexpensive, because they are too small to bloom well.

Tender Bulbs, tubers, and corms generally bloom in mid to late summer. Examples are dahlias, gloxinias, tuberous begonias, and gladiolus. Plant them when the ground warms after the last frost. They don't survive the severe winter cold so they must be dug in the fall and stored in a frost-free location..

Tuberous roots are composed of root tissue. Dahlias are an example of plants with tuberous roots. Dahlias should be planted in a location with well-drained soil that gets at least six hours of sun a day. Dig a hole about four to six inches deep, not too deep. Lay the tubers horizontally on their sides, with roots down and buds facing upward. Plant in a location protected from the wind. It's a good idea to place a stake in the ground at the time of planting so you don't disturb the growth when the plant is near maturity. Check height of variety you choose for proper stake height. Old wire tomato cages can be used for support.

Bulbs are composed of a thin, flattened stem surrounded by fleshy, dried leaf bases. Onion, garlic, narcissus, tulips, and lilies are examples of plants that form bulbs. Purchase lilies as soon as they are on the market and plant them immediately. Plant lilies 6-12 inches deeper than the depth of the bulb, plant in well-drained soil, giving ample moisture year around, they need coolness and shade at roots and sun or filtered shade at tops, and plant out of the wind.

Corms have solid interiors, developed from swollen stems. Roots form at the base. Some examples of plants that form corms are crocus, and gladiolus. Gladiolus should be planted at a depth of three times the diameter of the corm, 4 to 6 inches apart, and about 5 corms to a grouping. They prefer full sun, needing well-drained soil and protection from the summer winds.

Fertilize with bone meal when planting all new bulbs. Use bone meal to fertilize after blooming.

The WSU Master Gardeners will hold their Annual Plant Sale on May 17, 9-2:00 PM.
The location is at the Moses Lake Senior Center parking lot, 608 East 3rd Avenue.

If you would like further information, contact the WSU Master Gardeners. Many publications are available for a minimal cost. The WSU Grant-Adams Area Extension Office is located at the Grant County Courthouse. Master Gardeners are available to help with gardening questions on Mondays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. To contact the WSU Master Gardeners by phone 754-2011, 765-2160 or 800-572-0119, ext. 413. Additional information can be accessed on our web site at http://grant-adams.wsu.edu/master_gardeners/master_gardeners.htm.

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