

Welcome to Hamlen's Helping Hand!

This is our 4th newsletter of 2003. We look forward to seeing you at the garden center.

Fall is the time for planting and preparing for winter.

In this issue...

Time To Plant Trees

Fall Check List

Cannas & Dahlias

Geraniums

House Plants

When Is A Good Time To Force Bulbs

Hamming it Up

Hamlines

Hamlen's Helping Hand



Hamlen's Garden Center
157 St. Albans Road
Swanton, Vermont

Fall is For Planting

Time To Plant Trees



When you plant trees and shrubs at this time of year, you are giving them time to establish their roots before the winter sets in. It may not seem warm to us, but the soil temperature is quite adequate for the roots to start growing. Adding bonemeal when planting can help stimulate root growth. It is a slow release organic fertilizer that will be available in the spring when the plant needs it most.

Protection

Staking and winter protection is important to any newly planted shrub. Evergreens and broad leaf evergreens should be wrapped with burlap or if too big, anti-desiccant can be applied. This is a coating that is sprayed on in the late fall to help keep the plant from drying out. Your efforts from protecting your plants will be quickly noticed in the spring. The plants will be healthy with no winter burn, and the broad-leaf evergreens will have many more blooms.

We are always happy to answer any questions you may have on this information or any other plant questions you need answered.

Fall Check List

Fall clean-up

Clean up and weed vegetable and annual gardens. Cut back perennials after the first frost. Cut back right to the ground and remove any of the old foliage that is on the ground. This helps fight diseases and over-wintering insects that live in the debris. Lawns should be mowed at 1 1/2 in. tall, (1/2 in. shorter than usual) and raked thoroughly so that all leaves and debris are removed. A fall fertilizer can be applied now. This will help the lawn get a quick start in the spring.

Pruning

Prune in the late fall when the leaves have fallen and the plants are dormant. Prune to remove any wood that is dead, dying or diseased. Pruning for shape can also be done at this time. Spring flowering shrubs like lilacs and forsythias should be pruned for shape in the spring after flowering. This will avoid losing flower buds. The plants will respond by having new growth, better flowering and a healthier plant.

Fertilizing

For vegetable, annual and perennial gardens amend the soil in the fall. To do this use manure and chopped up leaves forked into the top 3-4 in. of the soil. The rain, and snow will help break them down and add nutrients to the root zones of the plants.

Trees and shrubs generally do not need fertilizing unless the area is very difficult. Ex. If the plants are under eaves of the house and the plant is very stressed. Manure and compost can be added at any time and will not harm the plants. Bonemeal worked 6 inches into the soil will encourage root development.



Bulbs that are established can benefit from fertilizing at this time of year. Bloodmeal can be added to the top 2-3 in. (If you are in the country with lots of wild animals, wait until the spring to apply because it attracts animals to dig up your bulbs)

Planting

This is often an ideal time to plant. Bulbs, of course are planted now for spring color. Seeding or sodding a new lawn area will benefit from the cooler weather because of a more ample

supply of rain and less evaporation. Trees and shrubs can be planted until the ground is frozen.

Cannas & Dahlias



These plants only get better with age and should be saved from year to year. They are not hardy and need to be dug up in the fall after the first hard frost. Clean off the soil from the roots and hang to dry from in a well ventilated area. Approx. 2-3 weeks. Take the plant and cut off the stems to 2 in. above the root system . Using alcohol to disinfect your pruners or knife, cut out any pieces that are soft or diseased. Clean your tools after each cut to insure that infections are not spread. Once you have finished cutting back the foliage , stem



and cleaned up the roots, you can place them in a wooden box with dry sawdust around and on top of them This will ensure that they stay dry until April when you can then pot them up for spring planting.

Geraniums

It seems to me such a waste to see people throwing out their geraniums when it only takes a bit of effort to save them. The bonus of rescuing these poor plants from the trash is that they will be twice the size they were the year before. Dig them up before frost. Clean off the soil from the root system and hang to dry in a dry well ventilated room for a week or two. Once dry, cut the plant back to 2 -3 in. before the main stem. Then store in a double paper bag. Close tight and leave in a dry well vented spot until march when you can pot them up. The geraniums will be ready for spring planting. Fertilize once they have been potted



House Plants

Bringing in your house plants that have been outside should be quarantined from your other indoor plants. The plants that are outside will often have insects on them and should be treated with insecticidal soap before going beside other clean plants. Often the plants should be treated twice to insure that they are insect free. This is an ideal time to check root system and transplant if necessary. Prune for shape and clean out any dead or diseased branches.



When Is A Good Time To Force Bulbs?

Bulbs are a beautiful addition to any house or apartment. They can add color and fragrance to an otherwise colorless season. Forcing bulbs is very easy. The timing is everything.

Select your favorite bulbs. The size of the bulb and the size of the pot will determine how many bulbs you will need. To select a pot you should find one that is fairly shallow but wide, called bulb pans. Fill the pot 1/3 full with bulb potting soil. Arrange the bulbs so that they do not touch the side of the pot or each other. The bigger the bulb, the deeper it should go. Hyacinths and daffodils should be placed almost at the bottom, crocus and snowdrops should be only an inch and a half below. Place them with the root hairs down. If there are no roots, then it should be pointy side up. Fill the pot to 1/2" below the rim. This space allows for watering.





Water thoroughly. Allow soil to soak up water for 1 day, Place in a frost free root cellar or garage. Give at least 8 - 10 weeks of cold before bringing inside. You can stagger the timing of when you bring them out of the cold so that you have flowers at different times of the winter. Once brought in from the cold, allow to thaw, then soak thoroughly. Place in a warm filtered light and watch them go. Allow them to slightly dry out before watering. Water regularly.

Types of Bulbs to Use

Daffodil, Hyacinth, Tulip, Snow drop, Crocus, Muscari.



Hamming It Up

While attending a marriage seminar on communication, the husband and his wife listened to the instructor declare, "It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other."

He addressed the husband, "Can you describe your wife's favorite flower?"

He leaned over, touched his wife's arm gently and whispered, "Pillsbury All-Purpose, isn't it?"

Hamlines

"The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies."

Gertrude Jekyll

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