

Suburban Gardener

Time To Tuck Tulip Bulbs Into The Ground

By BETTY FRANKEL

As the leaves turn color and drift down from high branches the gardener knows that the fall planting season has arrived. Now is the time to plant tulip bulbs for the spring garden. Tuck some of these capsule plants into the ground this season and you are assured of flowers next year. The plants exist within the bulbs in embryo form.

Tulips are among the best known and best loved of all garden flowers. They are natives of the Mediterranean region and tulip designs were found as decoration on pottery estimated to be about 4,000 years old.

The name "tulip" comes from a Persian word that means turban and is said to refer to the resemblance of the flower to a Turk's turban. They were first cultivated in Turkey and were brought from there to Vienna in 1554 and to Holland in 1608.

Size and form vary somewhat, too. Darwin tulips, which are the best known, are from two to 2 1/2 feet tall. The species tulips are less than a foot high, and the type known as "breeder" tulips are about three feet tall.

Although most tulips have the simple cup shape that small children like to draw to represent a flower, there are variations on this basic theme. Some have petals that flare wide so the bloom is almost flat. Others have a flaring bell-shape. Others have pointed petals and are called "Lily-flowered." The Parrot tulip has fringed frilled petals that are very exotic looking. There are also a few

double tulips that resemble peonies.

By choosing both species tulips and hybrid forms you can have tulips in bloom in your garden for about six weeks, from early April to late May.

THE SPECIES tulips, which are small and informal, are the earliest to bloom. There are several kinds available in local garden centers. They are known by such names as Kaufmanniana, eschiana, and Griegii.

An outstanding development among the Emperor tulips which were produced by crossing a wild Fosteria species tulip with long stemmed tulips. The results yielded the beloved Emperor tulip and more recently white and yellow and other tulips in the same series. They have huge flowers, bloom early, but have short stems so they are not buffeted about by storms.

Tulips are best planted in a sunny location. They do not thrive in shade. Also, it is essential that they have good drainage. If water stands around the bulbs in late winter they are apt to rot. Meet these few requirements and tulips will produce a spectacular display with a minimum of effort.

Garden Reminders

Last call to seed bare patches in the lawn. There is still a few weeks time to lay sod... Finish planting evergreens... The season has arrived for planting trees and shrubs that lose their leaves... Remember to water newly planted trees and shrubs each week if there is not enough rain... Include in this weekly watering any trees and shrubs planted in the spring and also any planted last year... Put leaves on the compost pile. Recycle them and help the garden and the ecology... Begin garden clean-up. Put spent but healthy plants on the compost pile. Do not put diseased plants or foliage on the pile and do not put weeds with seeds on the pile... Dig up bulbs of gladioli, cannas, and dahlias after early frost and store them indoors...

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Inland Lake Guidelines Set

Today, many of Michigan's 11,000 inland lakes are threatened by overdevelopment and potential resultant pollution. The Michigan Water Resources Commission has developed the following guidelines for citizens who are anxious to protect their lake water quality and the surrounding environment.

Primary responsibility for the water quality of inland lakes lies with the cities, villages or townships in which they are located. If you have notified local officials about known discharges or raw sewage oil or other pollutants into your lake and have seen no correction of the problem, contact the Michigan Water Resources Commission, Stevens T. Mason Building, Lansing.

NUTRIENTS—especially the phosphates present in human waste and detergents—are the chief cause of the rapid increase in aging of lakes (eutrophication). Nutrients stimulate algae and water weed growth, creating undesirable shoreline conditions for recreational use. Decay of these plants deprives game fish of oxygen and allows rough fish to replace them.

Michigan has a progressive phosphorus removal program underway throughout the state, requiring additional community waste treatment facilities. However, the scattered housing developments around our inland lakes often present special waste problems.

SEPTIC TANK treatment is used by most inland lakefront property owners. The extent of septic tank effluent runoff to the lakes is not known at this time. Researchers have found that certain types of soil do filter out most of the phosphorus and other nutrients before such seepage reaches the lakes.

Lakefront owners who have septic tank facilities should take special care to minimize the volume of detergents used for laundering. The amount of phosphate detergents used can be greatly reduced through experimentation.

If surface water drains are installed on your property, be certain they are far enough from your septic system. Sewage residue may reach the lake through these drains.

Remember to protect your water supply too! Improperly installed septic tank systems can affect wells. County health department officials should be contacted for direction on proper location and maintenance of septic tank systems.

The Michigan Water Resources Commission has begun a study of water quality problems at Houghton Lake. The findings of this study are expected to apply to all inland lakes throughout the state. Communities around highly developed Houghton Lake now have wastewater treatment projects underway.

SHORELINE LAWNS are not recommended by conservationists and ecologists. For better protection of water quality and surrounding lake vegetation, the shoreline should be left in its natural state. A sand buffer beach strip will help. If you already have an established lakefront lawn, build a sand buffer beach strip between it and the water line.

Lakefront property owners intent on fertilizing already established lawns should take the following precautions, suggested by Professor Boyd G. Ellis of Michigan State University's crop and soil sciences department.

The soil should be tested to determine if it lacks needed phosphorus and potassium. This is particularly important in that most fertilizers on the market for lawn use contain more phosphorus and potassium than the grass actually requires. Consequently, use of mixed fertilizers leads to the increase of phosphorus in the soil. This increase is readily detected by

soil testing. County Cooperative Extension Agents provide soil testing information.

Nitrogen fertilizer should be applied when the grass is actively growing to minimize loss of nutrients to nearby lakes or streams. For the most effective application, begin fertilizing in the spring when temperatures are sufficiently warm to produce growth of grass and discontinue before the grass ceases to grow in the fall, with the last application not later than August 15.

PESTICIDE AND HERBICIDE spraying on and around the lakes can damage the environment if improper procedures or products are used.

SILT AND DEBRIS, washed from the land around construction sites blanket fish spawning beds and food

supplies. Steep banks and exposed soil require immediate seeding and mulching or planting of native vegetation to deter erosion.

ALL BOATS equipped with sanitary facilities must have sewage holding tanks, recirculating self-contained marine toilets or sewage incinerator devices, under the 1970 Watercraft Pollution Control Act 167.

Owners of these properly equipped boats who are far from Great Lakes marina pumpout stations can empty holding tanks at one of the many gasoline filling stations equipped for travel trailer waste disposal. Houseboats should be connected to an on-land septic tank or sewage system.

A pamphlet on "Water Weed Control" is available from Fisheries Division, Stevens T. Mason Building, Lansing 48926. If you are considering

such a project, keep in mind that certain water plants are food for waterfowl.

Insect spraying near lakes should be applied with caution, giving wind direction and approved pesticides first consideration. The Natural Resources Department's research and development and information and education divisions and the Bureau of Water Management have available a free list of "Pesticide Dos and Don'ts". The list may be obtained by request to any of these divisions in the Stevens T. Mason Building, Lansing.

LITTER poses a continuous pollution problem for our lakes and streams. Every citizen should be reminded that litter accumulated on ice-covered lakes during the winter will end up in the water or on the beach in the spring. Oil from snowmobiles crossing the lakes is another

threat to water quality.

The need for lake level stabilization has been recognized since the first change in the State Constitution in 1908. Since that time, Michigan has had a succession of inland lake level laws. Under the current law, Act 136, P.A. of 1961 as amended, each County Board of Commissioners has the authority and responsibility in lake level matters. Lakefront property owners can seek aid through request or through a 2/3 petition of waterfront freeholders to the commissioners.

Usually, the cost for establishing and maintaining a legal level or levels is minor in comparison to the benefits received. Although the Department of Natural Resources cannot make field surveys and engineering reports as was once the case, DNR continues to aid lakefront property owners.

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