



# Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints

## October 2018

October is a great month to be outside doing gardening chores-- raking, dividing perennials, planting shrubs, trees, and spring bulbs. The air is crisp and the sky is beautiful with shades of blue and puffy white clouds. Take the time outdoors to enjoy your gardens.

**BULBS and TUBERS**--Look for high quality bulbs in your garden center that are plump and firm. Also look for big bulbs as the bigger they are, the more they bloom compared to smaller bulbs of the same variety. Plant spring bulbs among daylilies, ferns, hosta, or ground covers. As these plants grow, they will hide the dying bulb foliage.

Spring bulbs for forcing can be potted and stored in a cool, frost-free place until it is time to bring them indoors, which is usually twelve to fifteen weeks after planting. Canna and dahlia tubers can be dug when frost nips their foliage. Allow the plants to dry under cover in an airy, frost-free place before storage.

Plant tulip, daffodil, hyacinth and crocus bulbs before the ground freezes. Check the planting directions that come with the bulbs, but generally dig a hole two to three times deeper than the bulb is tall. A three-inch-tall bulb should be dug six to nine inches deep. If a problem, place chicken wire on the ground over newly planted bulbs to deter animals from digging.

The easiest way to prevent weeds from being an issue come spring is to spread two to three inches of mulch over the soil, but wait until the ground freezes. The bulbs will easily push up through the mulch, but most weed seeds will not. Water the soil well after planting to eliminate air pockets in the soil that could cause your bulbs to dry out. Also, this will encourage them to send out roots and become established. Most bulbs look best when planted in irregular groupings instead of straight rows. Try tossing them onto the ground and plant them where they fall. For a dramatic show of spring-flowering bulbs, plant smaller perennial species such as crocus or scilla over bigger bulbs such as daffodil, tulip or lily.



--Sandy