



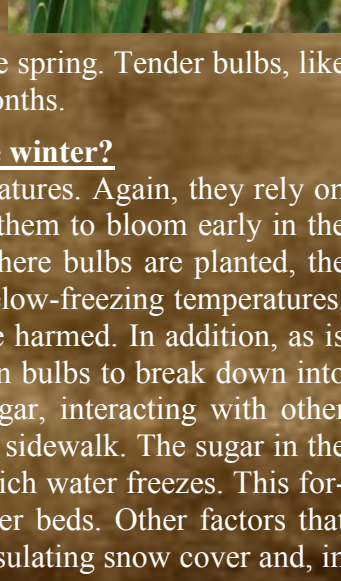
November 2011

## ...part 2 **Shedding Light on Bulbs**

If you read last month's article on fall planted, spring flowering bulbs, you have likely mastered the basics of planting bulbs. Now, we will answer a few more frequently asked questions.

### **Is there more than one type of bulb?**

There are basically two types of flower bulbs: those that bloom in the spring and those that pop up in the summer. Spring bulbs, like tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths, flower in March, April, and May. They must be planted in the fall. Summer bulbs, such as dahlias and gladioli, are planted in the spring and bloom in July, August, and September. These groups of bulbs are often referred to as hardy or tender bulbs. Hardy bulbs, such as tulips, can withstand the cold of winter and require cool temperatures to trigger the biochemical reaction that makes them bloom in the spring. Tender bulbs, like dahlias, are sensitive to frost and bloom in the warm summer months.



### **Why don't fall planted bulbs freeze in the ground during the winter?**

These bulbs are designed by nature to withstand winter temperatures. Again, they rely on the winter cold to start the biochemical process, which allows them to bloom early in the spring. While winter soil can often freeze to depths beyond where bulbs are planted, the actual soil temperatures rarely fall below 29 degrees. At just-below-freezing temperatures, water in the cells of the bulb may freeze, but the cells won't be harmed. In addition, as is true for many hardy plants, cold temperatures trigger starches in bulbs to break down into glucose, or sugar, and other small molecules. This simple sugar, interacting with other small molecules, acts as much the same way as salt on a winter sidewalk. The sugar in the bulb, like the salt on the sidewalk, lowers the temperature at which water freezes. This fortunate chemistry helps keep bulbs safe and snug in their winter beds. Other factors that help keep soil temperatures within tolerable limits include an insulating snow cover and, in colder areas, a nice layer of mulch.

### **Are deer and other pests attracted to bulbs?**

Some bulbs, such as tulips and crocus, are favorites of deer and other garden pests. Other bulbs, like daffodils and hyacinths, are extremely resistant to most garden pests. In cases of light animal pressure, repellents have been successful in protecting your investment. We have used a Bonide product called Molemax granules very successfully on a number of occasions. In areas where the animal pressure is severe, only physical barriers, such as fences and planting in chicken wire cages, can help. When that is the case, it is best to stick with pest-resistant varieties.

### **Do all bulbs naturalize?**

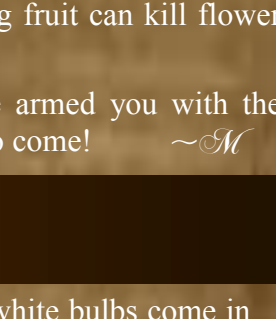
Many fall planted, spring flowering bulbs are ideally suited for naturalizing. These come back and even multiply year after year, providing the garden with a "natural" look when planted in the grass, around trees, or under shrubs. Low growing daffodils, crocuses, Snowdrops, and Scillas are suitable for naturalizing. Many taller growing bulbous plants, such as Trumpet Daffodils, tulips, Bluebells, and Cammassia, also naturalize.

When planting near trees or among rocks, plant in clusters of at least six bulbs for a more natural look. When planting bulbs in the grass, consideration should be given to the fact that mowing the grass needs to be held off for about six weeks until flowers and leaves have withered.

Some bulbs, especially tulips, will resist naturalizing in favor of perennializing. This means that they will come back for several years and then start to diminish. To help those types of bulbs regenerate, clip flower heads off after the bloom has faded. The leaves still must be left until they wither in about six weeks or so, allowing photosynthesis to regenerate the bulb. A good trick is to mask the withering leaves with summer annuals or late blooming perennials. After yellowing, the leaves can be chopped back to the ground.

### **Can bulbs be grown indoors?**

Many types of spring flowering bulbs are suitable for indoor forcing — a technique to coax bulbs to bloom out of season in the winter months. The easiest to force are the flamboyant Amaryllis and Paperwhite Narcissus. These require no chilling prior to blooming, so they are perfect for beginners and experts alike.

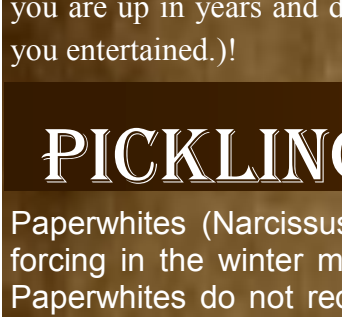


Other varieties, such as many of the hyacinths, tulips, daffodils, and crocus, can be forced, but they first need a cold period (chilling) to be able to come to bloom. These bulbs must be potted, watered in, then watered only sparingly, and stored at temperatures between 40-50 degrees for 12-15 weeks. An unheated garage or old refrigerator are perfect. However, don't store fruit in the same refrigerator. Ethylene gas from ripening fruit can kill flower embryos.

"Here's to" all your bulb endeavors! We hope these articles have armed you with the knowledge you need to enjoy your spring flowering bulbs for years to come! ~M

## **The Amaryllis**

I look so forward to the time of year when the Amaryllis and Paperwhite bulbs come in. The minute that they are unloaded off the truck at Andrews, we quickly unpack them to see how they look. My favorite are the jumbo, deep red amaryllis. Then comes the hard part of trying to decide how many I want!



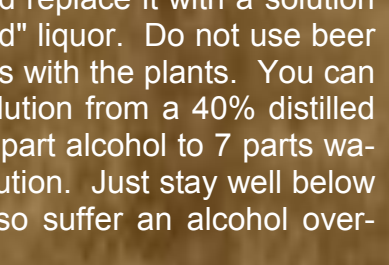
I try to get them started towards the end of October so that they will be blooming during Christmas. Sometimes I wait too long, and they bloom on Valentines! They are so easy to plant and maintain that they would not be a bother to anyone if you wanted to give them for a gift.

At Andrews, we offer two different kinds of Amaryllis. The pre-boxed, all inclusive, and very easy to set up Amaryllis. Or the jumbo, bulk Amaryllis. I take home the jumbo bulbs. I like to plant my bulbs in clay pots and decorate around the base of the bulb with gold-painted walnuts (a very economical, easy way to dress up a not so pretty bulb—after all, it was George Washington Carver who said, "When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.")

Michael and I used to give our grandparents an Amaryllis as a Christmas present. It was so sweet to get a thank you card from them that included a daily grow chart to show us how fast they had grown (Yes... they would measure them daily... Hey, when you are up in years and don't have a busy daily schedule it's the small things that keep you entertained.)! ~J

## **PICKLING YOUR PAPERWHITES**

Paperwhites (Narcissus) are popular bulbs for indoor forcing in the winter months. Unlike other narcissus, Paperwhites do not require a cold period and can be simply planted in pots with soil, gravel, marbles, or other decorative material. With a little water, their roots will rapidly form, and they will begin to grow leaves and shoots. Their fragrant, white flowers will usually open within 2-3 weeks of planting.



A common problem, however, is that they often grow too tall and flop over. There is a simple and effective way to reduce stem and leaf growth. The "secret" is using dilute solutions of alcohol in their water. Properly used, the result is Paperwhites 1/3 to 1/2 shorter, with equal sized flowers that last as long as normal.

### **HOW TO DO IT**

We suggest planting and watering as you usually would. Wait about 1 week until roots are growing and the shoot is green and growing about 1-2" above the top of bulb. At this time, pour out the remaining water and replace it with a solution of 4-6% alcohol made from just about any kind of "hard" liquor. Do not use beer or wine. The sugars in them will cause major problems with the plants. You can do the calculations, but, for example, to get a 5% solution from a 40% distilled alcohol (gin, vodka, whiskey, rum, tequila), you add 1 part alcohol to 7 parts water. This is an 8-fold dilution yielding a 5% alcohol solution. Just stay well below 10% solution. As with humans, Paperwhites can also suffer an alcohol overdose!

Use this solution, instead of plain water, for further watering of your bulbs. It's as simple as that! The result will be a plant 1/3 shorter, but with flowers just as large, fragrant, and long-lasting as usual, and the plant will be nicely proportioned. You will see results within just a few days. ~J

## **Gardening No-No's!**

I was recently catching up on a gardening blog (awaytogarden.com) and came across a funny (and true) list of common gardening no-no's. I am usually a proponent of the thought 'to each their own', but sometimes, it's just too much! I got a kick out of the list and was even able to add a few of my own! (\*disclaimer: this is only my (& the garden blogger's) opinion; don't take it to heart! If you want to rock one of these ideas, go for it; just don't tell me about it! :)

- #1. **Dyed rust-colored mulch**... Any dyed mulch, in fact, is a no-no to my eye.
- #2. **Volcano mulch** (that is, piled up deep against trunks of trees and shrubs.)
- #3. **Cartoon-like or out of scale garden décor items**, especially in plastic, to include gnomes (though there is some sentimental dispute about gnomes), wishing wells, and lions.
- #4. **White plastic anything.**
- #5. **Gravel or lava rock as a decorative mulch** outside of dry zones or containers.
- #6. **While we are on the subject, white rock mulch** in the outdoor landscape is awful.
- #7. **Chemicals** and chemical-laden products.
- #8. **Too much space between plants.** Too much lawn.
- #9. **Bad staking**, particularly staking with other than natural bamboo and twine.
- #10. **Inserting plastic nursery tags** into the garden as markers.
- #11. **Sprinkler systems** running in the rain or when otherwise not needed.
- #12. **Excessively noisy power tools.**
- #13. **Landscape fabric.** With very few exceptions, I detest the stuff!
- #14. **Winged-weeders.** Tried-and-true way to have to do the same job over and over...
- #15. **Silk Flowers**...oh, how I despise silk flowers (especially those that have a nice collection of dust)!
- #16. **Evergreens that are sheared** to the point of their browned-out, inner parts. I see it in commercial landscapes all the time.
- #17. **Using one 4" annual** to fill up a 12" pot, expecting it to look lush and full.
- #18. **Using Round-Up as a tool to edge the lawn.** Really? ~L

## **Cook's Corner**

Cook's corner is where we can share and inspire one another, by sharing wonderful new and old-stand-by recipes! If you have a recipe that you love, and wouldn't mind sharing it with us, please send it to: [andrewsseed@gmail.com](mailto:andrewsseed@gmail.com)

Not only is this a delicious dessert, but it also presents beautifully! I think it tastes the best at room temperature, which makes it a great recipe to take to parties, pot-lucks, etc. (Special Note: I couldn't find start anise, so I used just a splash of anise extract. I am not a special fan, but you can't taste it in the dessert; it mostly brings out the vanilla flavors.)

### **Vanilla-Spiced Caramel Pear Tart**

**Crust:**  
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed

**Pears:**  
3 T. butter  
1/2 c. sugar  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 whole star anise  
3 whole cloves  
Generous pinch of kosher salt  
1/2 vanilla bean, split lengthwise  
6 medium firm, bur ripe Anjou pears, peeled, halved lengthwise, cored

**Filling:**  
1/4 c. butter  
1/2 vanilla bean, split lengthwise in half  
2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half  
2 whole star anise  
6 whole cloves  
1/4 c. sugar  
1 large egg  
Generous pinch of kosher salt  
1 1/2 T. flour  
1 egg white, beaten to blend

**For crust:**  
Roll out pastry to 12 in. square and trim off corners, forming slightly rounded crust. Transfer pastry to a 10 in. diameter spring-form pan, pressing pastry firmly onto bottom and 1 to 1 1/2 in. up sides of pan. Freeze crust until firm, 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

**For Pears:**  
Melt butter in heavy large skillet over low heat. Add sugar and next 4 ingredients. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean; add bean. Increase heat to medium-high and cook, stirring until sugar melts and turns brown (color of peanut butter), about 3 minutes.

Reduce heat to medium; add pears, rounded side down. Cook until pears are almost tender, turning and moving skillet around occasionally to ensure even cooking, 10-15 min., depending on ripeness of pears. Carefully turn pears over; continue to cook until pears are very tender, about 10 min. longer. Remove skillet from heat; cool pears in skillet with spices (pears will release juice while cooling).

**For filling:** Melt butter in small saucepan over low heat. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean; add bean. Add cinnamon, star anise, and cloves. Increase heat to medium; cook until butter is golden (watch to avoid burning), 3-4 min. Remove vanilla bean and spices from butter; discard. Whisk sugar, egg, and coarse salt in medium bowl. Whisk in flour. Gradually whisk browned butter into egg mixture.

Position rack in center of oven. Preheat to 400. Brush frozen crust with beaten egg white. Pour filling into crust; spread evenly over bottom of crust (filling will be very thin). Using slotted spatula, remove pears from skillet, allowing excess syrup to drain back into skillet; reserve syrup. Arrange pears, rounded side up, atop filling (about 9 around edge and 3 in center of pan).

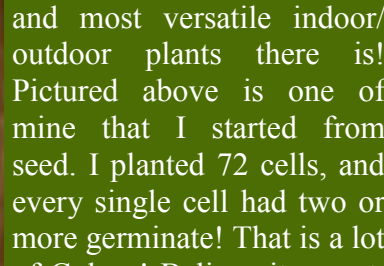
Bake tart until brown at deep golden and filling is set and crust is edges, about 1 hour. Run small knife around sides of pan to loosen tart. Release pan sides. Transfer tart to platter. Let stand, uncovered, at room temperature to cool slightly until just warm. Just before serving, boil syrup in skillet until reduced to generous 1/3 cup, 1-2 minutes. Discard spices. Drizzle syrup over pears.

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## **Reminders!**

1. Remember not to tidy up your beds too well. Leaving some uncut perennials and grasses provides shelter and food for wildlife during lean months.
2. Leave water out for wildlife as well, or purchase a de-icer for your birdbath.
3. Harvest and store root crops.
4. Insulate your greenhouse (bubble wrap works well).
5. Use leaves that have fallen to cover and protect soil from rain.
6. Weed! Taking care of weeds now prevents them from growing stronger and spreading during the winter months, making your job a lot harder in the spring.

## **Plant Spotlight**



'RAINBOW' COLEUS

Coleus are one of the easiest and most versatile indoor/outdoor plants there is! Pictured above is one of mine that I started from seed. I planted 72 cells, and every single cell had two or more germinate! That is a lot of Coleus! Believe it or not, now is a great time to get those seeds started. The earlier you start them, the bigger and more pot-ready they are come spring (and they can serve as some nice indoor color until the weather is nice enough outside for them)!



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## **Quotables**

*I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape - the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show.*  
~Andrew Wyeth

I consider every plant hardy until I have killed it myself... at least three times.  
~Tony Avent (plant hunter and proprietor)

## **HOW'S THE WEATHER?**

**Great gifts for the person in your life who has everything!**

**The Weems Stormglass Mysterium Predictor**



Since the 1700's, this interesting device has been used for predicting the weather one to two days in advance. It requires no batteries or programming, and it works indoors or out. Changes occur in the crystal formations from day to day that signify what weather changes to expect.

**Rapitest Rainfall Gauge**



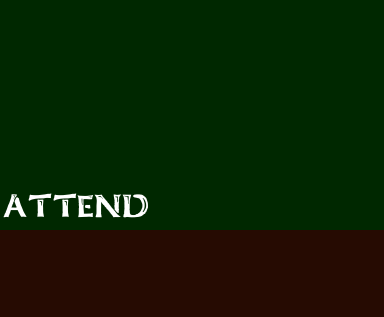
Measure the rain in a stylish way with this rain gauge! It is scaled in inches and millimeters. The height is adjustable, and it's a snap to assemble!

**Galileo Thermometer with Glass Globe Barometer**



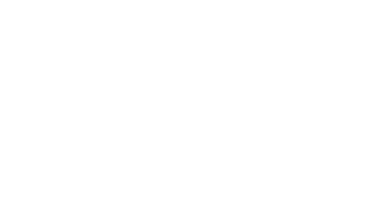
This is one of our favorites in terms of interest. The colored balls in the liquid thermometer rise and fall depending on the temperature. The glass water barometer responds to changes in the air temperature. Fair weather is indicated by a low fluid level in the glass spout while a higher fluid level in the glass spout means inclement weather is in your future. This decorative barometer features a lovely etching of our Earth's continents.

**Station Clock & Thermometer**



One side of this beautiful wall-mount clock shows the time; the other side shows the temperature!

*Written by:*



## **2011 SEMINAR SCHEDULE**

**November 26th**  
Garlands, Wreaths and more!  
**\*ALL SEMINARS BEGIN AT 10AM & ARE FREE TO ATTEND**

## **2012 SEMINAR SCHEDULE**

**March 17th**  
Proper Landscape Maintenance: Watering & Pruning with Benny Seiders  
**April 21st**  
Container Planting Made Easy  
**May 19th**  
Healing Herbs (w/ guest speaker)  
**June 16th**  
Planting for the Heat  
**October 20th**  
The Ins & Outs of Terrarium and Fairy Gardens  
**November 24th**  
Garland & Wreath Making  
**\*ALL SEMINARS BEGIN AT 10AM & ARE FREE TO ATTEND**