



K-STATE
Research and Extension

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Dickinson County Extension Horticulture Newsletter

Time for planting bulbs

Fall is the right time to get out the bulbs

Planting bulbs in the fall allows them to get acclimated to the soil and ready for their big show in the spring. Daffodils and tulips are garden favorites, but the list of species and varieties of bulb flowers is extensive. The general guideline is to plant bulbs twice as deep as their height. Once you have your hole dug it is a good idea to mix in some fertilizer containing phosphorus in the bottom of the hole.

Phosphorus does not normally move much within in the soil so top dressed applications after planting won't get the nutrient into the root zone where it is needed. The same is mostly true for potassium as well, but we're fortunate that the soil in Kansas is naturally high in potassium. Good sources of phosphorus include bone meal, compost, and manure. Using compost and manure will also add a number of micronutrients to the soil that are hard to top dress apply.

[Fall Bulbs Publication](#) [Perennial Bed Design](#)

Cleaning up the garden

Next year's garden starts now

The best way to keep the pest, weed, and fungus pressures down during the growing season is to proactively manage for them. Although there are a number of things still growing in the fall garden, it won't be long now until the first frost. It is important to remove all of the dead plant debris as fungus and pests will overwinter in it. If possible where you live, debris may be burned if dry enough. You don't want to compost it for use in your garden next year. Usually garden compost piles don't get hot enough during decomposition to kill the pathogens that might infect next year's crop. Once the large plants have been removed, use a

garden rake to get as much remaining plant material as you can. Next, lightly till the soil to not only bury the remaining litter, but also to prepare the soil for next spring. This tillage should be light enough to leave large clods.

Tree Issues

Common issues in Dickinson and the state

Here at the office I've seen a number of common tree problems around the county. The most common one is dying branches accompanied by bark splitting away from the tree. Most likely this had to do with last year's winter when it was warm during the day then suddenly dropped well below freezing. It was too fast for trees to go dormant and led to some die off. There is nothing that can be done except to remove the dead branches.

Another common problem I've seen is [environmental leaf scorch](#) on maples. This will look like the leaves are dying but are doing so uniformly at the tips. Some sides of the tree can be more affected than others. This happens when the tree isn't getting enough water and/or the root system is damaged. Watering deeply once a week during dry periods help reduce this effect. Remember when you are removing dead limbs from last year's winter kill, avoid removing any live branches. Removal will allow pathogens to get into the tree causing further damage. Live branches may be pruned when the tree goes dormant, between December to February

Check out the [Horticulture Department's Weekly Newsletter](#)

Thank you,
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