

# Arrowsmith Greenhouses

## *Nursery Notes*



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2880 Alberni Highway,  
Qualicum Beach B.C.,  
V9P 1X3  
Tel 250-752-1592 Fax  
250-752-2497  
Arrowsmithgreenhouses  
@shaw.ca



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Autumn is for reflection - at the same time a chance to look forward

As summer draws to a close, some of us wonder "Did we have a summer?" while others are happy that our summer was cooler than normal. On the positive side there was very little heat stress on our trees and shrubs and many perennials have bloomed longer and later than usual. Now as we look forward to a long and warm fall in this issue we will touch on planting fall veggies, battling tomato blight, planning for a spring bulb display. Our plant profile this month is the genus Allium.

Don't forget that fall is the best time for planting. You are essentially getting a full year's jump on planting in the spring. Trees, shrubs and perennials will all grow roots through the winter while it appears the plant is dormant. So we look forward to seeing you at the nursery before we go dormant for the season on October 31.



**Bulbs and Fall  
Mums will be in  
The week of  
Sept. 05**





## Planning for a Spring Bulb Display



September is the time to plan for your spring bulb garden, whether that is a huge border display or a container on your deck. Your first decision is season. Do you want all bulbs to bloom at the same time or do you want a staggered bloom? A staggered bloom can give you colour from February to June but the impact will be less than if you choose mid season bulbs that will all bloom in April. The advantage or disadvantage is that all the foliage will be dying down at the same

time. If you plant your bulbs amongst your herbaceous perennials then the perennial foliage will hide the dying bulb foliage. If you want a dedicated bulb border then you may want to lift the bulbs after flowering or plant annuals among the bulbs to hide the dying foliage. Another option is to plant the bulbs in nursery pots that can be lifted and placed in an out of the way area so the foliage can die down on its own to feed the bulbs for the following season. The other consideration is size. There is a huge size range for bulbs, so you need to make sure that when you are planning, your daffodils are not taller than your tulips or your tulips are not overshadowing your crocus. The third consideration is exposure. Bulbs need sunshine. So a full southern exposure is best but you can also have very good success with morning sun. If you are planting among your borders it is best to plant in groups. Usually 5 bulbs per hole for the



larger bulbs like tulips or daffs and up to 10 smaller bulbs per hole such as Crocus, Eranthus, Snowdrops etc. Bulbs are the easiest plants to grow because when you buy them the work is already done. Everything that bulb needs to bloom is already there you just need to add soil and water. If the bulbs are for naturalizing, meaning they are going to stay in the same spot for years then it is recommended that you use bone meal or an organic mix containing bone meal to feed the bulb for the coming years.

Here is a sampling of what we will have to offer this fall:

Narcissus varieties - King Alfred, Ice Follies, Salome, Cool Flame, Tommy's White, Segovia, Thalia, Jack Snipe, Jetfire, Golden Bells, New Baby



Tulip varieties - Kaufmania, Peppermint Stick, Chinese Coral

Fritillaria, Galanthus, Muscari, Anemone, Allium and more.





## September - October Plant Profile

### Allium

Now that your plans for your spring bulb display are well underway it is worth considering adding Alliums to the mix. These hardy easy to grow bulbs are a great addition to any perennial border. Alliums are



from the onion family and although the bulbs themselves have some onion scent the flowers do not and many varieties have a sweet fragrance.

Alliums start to emerge about the same time as crocus and most are spring bloomers. Allium 'Globe Master' is a real showstopper with blooms up to 10" in diameter and a bloom time of about 6 weeks starting

around the middle of May. The seed pods are very attractive as well, and extend the season to almost August. Allium 'Purple Sensation' is smaller and an earlier bloomer by about 2 weeks. Unlike many other spring bulbs the foliage of alliums die down before the flowers are finished which make them a very easy clean-up. Alliums are great naturalizers and form large clumps in just a couple of years.

Alliums are sun lovers and need an average amount of moisture. They benefit from a top dressing of compost with a bit of organic fertilizer once a year.



#### Read Between the Lines

(Common tag descriptions offered with tongue in cheek)

- Disease-Resistant - All the leaves will drop off, but it will survive.
- Easy to grow - Quickly takes over your entire backyard.
- Wildflower - Common weed.
- New Introduction - A less common weed.
- Tough - Squeezes out the other weeds.
- Grows anywhere - There goes the lawn.
- Hardy - Can survive the coldest winters in Florida.
- Distinctive - Uglier than sin.
- Intensely Fragrant - You'll need a gas mask.
- Long Blooming - Can last for days if you pickle it.
- Medium Grower - You will need a crane to prune it in 2 years.

## Late Blight on Tomatoes

We all know the scenario - Beautiful tomatoes are just getting ready to ripen. We can almost taste them on the sandwich or in the salad and WHAMO we get a couple of rainy days with some wind and the tomatoes start to turn brown. The reason for this is the spores need to sit in droplets of water to activate and attach themselves to healthy plant tissue. These spores can travel up to 20 km in the wind. Here a few tips to help control an outbreak in your garden:

\* Plant tomatoes in a sunny, warm, dry area - preferably with morning sun. The sooner the foliage dries off the less likely the spores are to be activated.

\*Grow plants under an overhang or other cover. This must be done before infection occurs or the problem may be made worse because of the humid conditions under the cover.

\* Grow tomatoes in large containers if possible, as there is less likelihood of ground soil contamination.

\*Do not compost any tomato, potato or other nightshade veggies. Bag them and burn (if allowed) or discard to the landfill.

\*Sprays are not very effective unless they are done diligently and often. Copper spray is the most widely accepted and most environmentally friendly. Apply at recommended label rates. They are not effective at all if there has been any infection. It is best to start a spray regime in July if this is the route you choose.



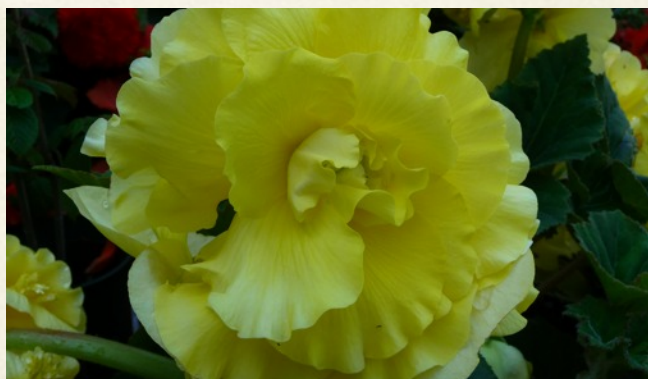


## Fall To Do List

- Continue to fertilize annuals and hanging baskets.
- Cut out Raspberry canes that have finished fruiting and tie new canes to support.
- Trees such as Maples and Birches that tend to bleed in Spring can be pruned now.
- Once temperatures have cooled and rain has returned, the lawn can be renovated. Thatching, overseeding and fertilizing (fall fertilizer) can be done for best results.
- Towards the end of September spring flowering bulbs can be planted. This can be done right through October and November.
- October and November are good months to lift and divide perennials.
- Cedar Hedges can be given a light to moderate pruning.
- In late October summer flowering Clematis (C varieties) can be cut to the ground. These are the varieties that bloom in July and August only.
- In early September take cuttings of Geraniums and Pelargoniums to over winter for next year.
- Once foliage starts to turn yellow lift clean and store Dahlias, Begonias, Cannas and any other tender summer bulbs.
- If a new tree or shrub is in your future now is the best time to plant.
- If we have a dry fall make sure that you continue watering, especially broadleaf evergreens. If they go into winter dry they are very susceptible to desiccation that results in browning and sometimes death.



Betula pendula



- Annuals should be removed once they have been hit with hard frosts and perennials can be cut back toward the end of October.



## Fall and Winter Veggies

Now that the summer vegetables are starting to wane you can turn your attention to growing some fall (or cool season) veggies. You can grow many vegetables from seed which should be started in July or you can buy vegetable starts to be planted out in late August or early September. Earlier is better than later with fall veggies as you need to take advantage of higher light levels to get the plants going. You will find that growing fall crops takes less work than summer crops. There will be fewer insects and weeds and even the watering will take up less time.

To prepare the bed you will do much the same as spring by adding some compost and organic fertilizer to the planting area. Some seeds can be sown directly at this time of year such as lettuce and spinach. Others will be more successful with seedlings.

Here is a list of some of the plant starters that we have to offer this month:

Lettuce varieties  
Mesclun West Coast Mix  
Purple Rudolf Broccoli  
Purple Sprouting Broccoli  
Brussel Sprouts  
Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Red Kale  
Red Bor Kale  
Red Russian Kale  
Westlandse Winter Kale  
Bright Lights Swiss Chard  
Onions

