

## Friends of Old Bulbs Gazette

Old House Gardens, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 734-995-1486

"The softened light, the veiling haze,  
The calm repose of autumn days,  
Steal gently o'er the troubled breast,  
Soothing life's weary cares to rest."

– Phebe A. Holder, 19th century poet and author,  
from "A Song of October," in The Queries Magazine, October 1890.

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### We Have Started Shipping . . .



But NOW is still a great time [to order!](#) Although 64 varieties are already sold out, we still do have plenty of amazing heirlooms for you to enjoy.

Looking for a bargain? We've now put some of our bumper crop varieties at 10-20% off and will be having a more general sale online once we ship out our current orders and see what we have left.

Winter is coming – but there is still time to plant! – so dream of a glorious spring by treating yourself or a loved one to some of our fabulous fall-planted beauties.

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### Answers to Our Top Five Fall Questions!



**When will my order arrive?** We are shipping to zones 4 and 5a first and then will be going by the date the order was placed - with some going as far back as last January. We are *hoping* to have the majority of current orders shipped by October 19, assuming all of our varieties have arrived by then (and unless you requested later shipping.) We'll send an email when your box leaves here with tracking information so you can see when it's likely to arrive. We are every bit as eager to get them to you as you are to receive them!

**It's still too warm to plant in my area - will the bulbs be harmed by waiting?** It's fine to store your bulbs until the weather cools. Keep them in a cool, dark place and mark your calendar to remember them. Each spring we hear from someone who just found their bulbs in that cool, dark place, and unfortunately that's often too late for them to do well when planted. In general, they should be fine for a month or so, but please check bag tags upon arrival for variety-specific planting needs: some should go in earlier either, like peonies or lilies, for example.

**We just had frost - is it too late to plant my bulbs?** No, they'll be fine. Bulbs prefer cool soil and as long as the ground hasn't frozen they'll be able to put down their roots. If you're concerned about an early winter, prepare your planting area now and cover it with mulch or a tarp to give it some insulation until you're able to plant.

**How do I know which end should be planted up?** Most bulbs have a teardrop sort of shape and the narrow end should go up with the wide end at the bottom. If you can't tell which end is which (as with *Eranthis*), plant them on their sides and the stem and roots will use gravity to determine which way to grow. You can consult the planting instructions which come with the bulbs for any special instructions for a variety.

**How can I protect my bulbs from animals?** If animals dig up your newly-planted bulbs, including ones like daffodils that they don't even eat, try covering their bed with plastic bird-netting, wire mesh, a window screen, or burlap bags for a few weeks until the inviting smell of freshly-dug earth disappears. Or try spraying the bed with nontoxic but foul-tasting Repels-All (sold in many garden centers and hardware stores) or sprinkling the granular form around the bulbs as you plant them.

If animals burrow to your bulbs, either plant them in wire-mesh boxes, buried plastic pots covered with chicken wire, crushed shale including [PermaTill](#) or [VoleBloc](#), or sprinkle the granular form of Repels-All around the bulbs as you plant them.

Moles often disturb bulbs as they dig for grubs. Killing the grubs (try beneficial nematodes or spraying your lawn with bitter, organic Mole-Med) will reduce the moles

- and this will make it harder for voles and mice which often use mole tunnels to feast on your bulbs.

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## Hurray for Alan Shipp's Hyacinths!



['Bismarck'](#)

['Grande  
Blanche  
Imperiale'](#)

['Mulberry  
Rose'](#)

['Queen of the  
Blues'](#)

['King of the  
Blues'](#)

['Dreadnought'](#)



['L'Innocence'](#)

['Grand  
Monarque'](#)

['Double Yellow  
Ophir'](#)

['Gloria Mundi'](#)

['Roman Dark  
Blue'](#)

Alan had a late season and so we just found out that we'll be able to offer 12 of his very rare treasures this fall, though they won't arrive here from the UK till later this month. We're expecting

['Bismarck'](#) Victorian favorite and one of the best for perennializing

['Grande Blanche Imperiale'](#) From 1798, the oldest traditional variety still available

['Mulberry Rose'](#) Unusual purplish-rose color

['Queen of the Blues'](#) Soft silvery-blue charmer

['King of the Blues'](#) Deep rich dark purple

['Dreadnought'](#) Dark blue Victorian double

['L'Innocence'](#) Loved for 150 years but hard to find now

['Grand Monarque'](#) Glorious silvery-blue, darker than Queen of the Blues

['Double Yellow Ophir'](#) Preserved for years in a small Lithuanian botanical garden

[\*\*'Gloria Mundi'\*\*](#) Ultra-rare double “eyed” variety rediscovered in Romania

[\*\*'Roman Dark Blue'\*\*](#) Hyacinths Somewhat darker than the Hortus lineage;

multiplies well

We're getting very limited quantities and they always go fast, so visit our website soon for the best selection! It's fine to include other bulbs in your order as well, just be aware that we won't be able to ship them until late in the month.

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## What Do I Do with My Dahlias in the Fall?



Unlike most other garden flowers, the shorter days of autumn spur dahlias into glorious bloom. Cut bouquets or a single blossom to enjoy indoors, share them to brighten someone's day, and visit them often to admire their fascinating diversity of form and colors...and all from such a humble beginning last spring! In warm areas dahlias can be left in the ground through winter, but they are not hardy in zones 7 and cooler. It's fine to treat them as an annual, replacing them in the spring as you would a geranium or fuchsia, but if you'd like to try storing your tubers over the winter, here are our tips.

It's best to wait until a week after frost first blackens their foliage before digging your tubers as this will give them time to harden off in the ground. Cut the stalks off to a few inches above ground level. The tubers are likely to have grown into larger clumps over the summer, so start digging at least a foot away from the stalks and work

carefully. Tag each clump with the variety name, wash off the soil, and allow it to dry in a cool place for roughly a day.

If you like, you can divide the clumps with a sturdy knife at this point, making sure that a piece of the crown (the thickened area where the stem meets the tuber) remained attached to every division since that's where the eyes for next spring's growth are located. You may want to dust cut sides with a fungicide like garden sulfur; at a minimum, allow cuts to air-dry for a day before storage.

You can store in plastic grocery bags, in boxes lined with a plastic garbage bag, or in covered plastic storage containers – something that will protect them from dehydrating. Pack in peat moss, coir, wood shavings, coarse vermiculite, or a blend as we do. Store in a cool, dry, dark place, ideally at 40-45F. Check them every now and then to allow moisture to escape if you see condensation or to sprinkle some water on the tubers if they seem to be shriveling.

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## Gladiolus Trouble-Shooting at Fall Clean-Up



Many parts of the country experienced hot, dry summers this year and so thrips and spider mites may have been more of a problem than usual. If your leaves look damaged or stunted, the problem is most likely thrips. If you see any form of webbing, you probably have spider mites. Mites can be smothered by spraying with Neem oil, while an insecticidal soap spray can help with thrips (see more thrip measures [here](#)). You can also do this simple test to see if you have a problem: put a white sheet of paper against the foliage about half-way up and shake the plant. If you see little dots on the

paper, you probably have thrips and/or spider mites, just not in high enough numbers to be more visible.

In zones 8 and warmer (lows to 10° F), glads can stay in the ground year round. They often survive winters in zones 7, 6, and even 5, too, according to many of our customers. (Learn more at our [Surprisingly Hardy Glads page](#).) As with dahlias, you don't have to dig and store your glads, but if you'd like to try to preserve (or even increase) a rare variety, dig 5-6 weeks after flowering or in the fall. If you wait till the foliage dies, cormels (small daughter corms) are likely to split off into the ground, so dig when the foliage is starting to turn yellow for a better chance of keeping them. Cut the stalk off as close to the corm as possible. Experts often recommend a 5-minute fungicide dip, or you can dust them with an insecticide/fungicide, or do nothing. Air dry for a few weeks and store in mesh or paper bags in a cool, dry place with good air circulation, ideally at 35-45F, but definitely above freezing.

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