

## Haddam Garden Club

October 2018 Garden Blog Article

by Cindy Tillson



### Leave the Leaves

Fall is truly here. Time to start cleaning up the yard and garden. I want to talk about leaves. Leaves are a valuable source of nutrients for the soil. Notice the woods; nobody cleans those leaves up and the plants there grow beautifully (assuming sufficient light and rain). If you dig a little out there, the soil is just black with organic matter. We should strive to have our soil be that nice.

The easiest way to do this is to let the leaves stay. They will smother your lawn if left whole so use the mulching blade on your mower to pulverize the leaves. If there are a lot of leaves, go round and round and over and over until they are pretty finely chopped. Blow them around the lawn or collect them. You can add them to your gardens now or SAVE them. You can create a round bin from chicken wire and just throw them in there. They will begin decomposition and be a wonderful addition to your spring gardens. PLEASE don't throw them in the woods or the landfill. You are tossing garden gold.

Plant bulbs. They are a delightful spring surprise and they are a good investment as they spread and last for years. The soil must be well drained and have organic matter worked into the top 12 to 18 inches. I prefer to dig up the area I am going to plant to the proper depth. This is generally two to three times as deep, as the bulb is tall; about 8" for a daffodil or tulip; less for smaller bulbs. Work bonemeal into the bottom of the hole, lay the bulbs root end down and cover with soil. You can keep covering the bulbs or add another layer of smaller bulbs. You will have all sorts of flowers poking up in the spring! Ultimately fill the hole and water well. That's it. A bulb planter can be used to plant individual bulbs. You can even find bulb planters to go on your electric screwdriver.

There are so many bulbs to choose from. Among those that rodents and deer won't bother: Snowdrops and winter aconite will come up right through the snow, a most welcome sight. Glory-of-the-snow produces small, upward-facing, star-shaped flowers that are pale blue with a white center on a plant that's about 6 inches tall. They can be planted anywhere in a perennial garden or in the lawn for naturalizing. Scilla can be planted this way too. It is so pretty en masse in the lawn. Allium provides uncommon architecture, texture and colors for the summer garden. They are real stunners. All of the narcissi and daffodils are safe as are Camissia.

Tulips and crocus will need some protection, crocus from rodents and tulips from deer.

The October Garden Club meeting will have no program as the club is taking a field trip to Natureworks in Northford.