

# YARD & GARDEN REPORT

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## A Mysterious, Magnificent Tree

What is that tree?

That's a frequently asked question this time of year. People discover clusters of strange, spiny nuts under trees in their neighborhood and get curious.

This is the Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*), a mysterious and magnificent tree.

My love for the buckeye started as a college student. Every student in the Tree Identification class was asked to pick a tree on campus and write about it. I wandered the campus of River Falls, Wisconsin looking for something special. Ash and elm trees were everywhere—not special.

Then I saw a small tree with creamy yellow flower spikes (*photo*). Fascinating! The feathery spikes were not dazzling but they were unique. Their beauty was subtle and drew me near.

A close look of the tree revealed its unusual, tropical-like leaves (*photo*). Each leaf looked like a palm of a hand with fingers opening. It was striking! It was rare!

Later that fall I stopped by the campus buckeye and my amazement continued. The tree was full of prickly nuts—and squirrels! The nuts were splitting open and seeds were scattered below. The seeds were chocolate brown, lustrous and smooth (*photo*). I later learned this is how the tree got its name; its seeds had the gleam of a deer *buck's* eye. The nuts are toxic, but the squirrels did not mind.



Figs. 1–4. Flowers, leaves and nuts of Ohio buckeye, a fascinating tree.

The Ohio buckeye will grow about 30 feet tall and wide. It is hardy to Zone 4. Most landscapers feel the tree is best used as a specimen tree in a large yard or a park.

Many nurseries offer a generic Ohio buckeye, but with a little effort you can find a superior hybrid. These cultivars display more consistent fall color and superior resistance to leaf scorch. 'Autumn Splendor' is praised for its glossy green leaves and maroon fall color. 'Homestead' has dark red fall color. 'Prairie Torch'

has flaming orange-red fall foliage (*top photo*) and is hardy to Zone 3.

If you are looking to add an extraordinary tree in your landscape, consider the magnificent buckeye.

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# Big, Bold Tulips

Do you want a brilliant landscape next spring? Think tulips! No other flower in spring can match tulips for their bright and showy colors.

The biggest challenge with growing tulips is they can die after a couple years. That's why I like the biggest, boldest, "baddest" tulips around: the Darwin hybrids.

Darwin hybrids boast the biggest blooms on the sturdiest stems. These hybrids are extremely vigorous. With proper care, they'll bloom for many years; longer than any other standard tulip.

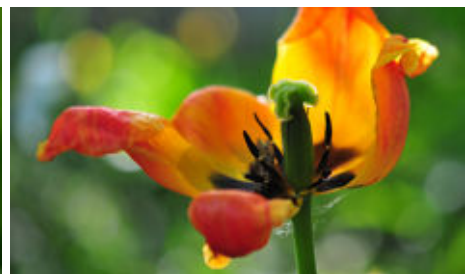
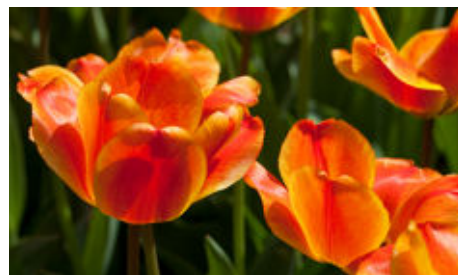
The biggest bulbs will give you the most vigorous plants. For tulips, the biggest bulbs will be 12+ cm in diameter (look on the package for size). The 11/12-cm tulips are fine. Avoid the small 10/11 cm in size; these bargain bulbs produce weak plants that fade out after one year.

To maximize impact, plant six or more bulbs of each cultivar. Plant bulbs in clumps or drifts, not in rows.

Early autumn is the best time to plant bulbs. We can delay planting until the ground freezes, but earlier planting leads to stronger roots and healthier growth in the future.

Tulips demand a well-drained soil. I like mixing in an inch of organic matter (peat moss, compost) to the bed before planting. Set tulip bulbs about eight inches deep. Sprinkle a bulb fertilizer containing timed-release nitrogen over the soil surface and work it in. A garden fertilizer such as 5–10–10 can be used as a substitute. Bonemeal is not recommended since it is not a complete fertilizer and attracts varmints that dig up the bulbs. Water the bulbs thoroughly to start them growing.

There is an amazing array of colors to choose from. The 'Apeldoorn'



*Figs. 5–9. Darwin hybrids boast big blooms on strong stems. Cultivars include (top to bottom, left to right): 'Akebono', 'Apeldoorn Elite', 'Pink Impression' and 'Gudoshnik'. Bottom right: Remove faded blooms to invigorate bulbs.*

and 'Impression' series (Figs. 6, 7) are popular and there are many more award winners to choose from. Go online and explore!

While exploring you'll notice many classes of tulips besides Darwin hybrids. Some look like water lilies, others look like peonies, and still others look like parrot birds. They all have their strengths (personally I love them all!), but none can match the Darwin hybrids for bloom size and durability.

Speaking of durability, the life span of your tulip bed will depend on how you take care of it. Clip off the flower stalks once blooms begin to fade (Fig. 9). We don't want plants to waste energy on producing seeds; instead we want plants to refill their bulbs for next spring.

After bloom, sprinkle fertilizer over the bulbs to encourage the foliage to stay green and produce lots of food for next year's blooms. Do not trim the foliage until it yellows.

# Timely Topics in North Dakota Yards and Gardens

## FRUITS



### When to harvest pears?

Harvest before fully mature. Pick when skin changes to yellowish-green, skin texture begins to feel smooth, and spots on the skin change from white to brown. 'Ure' and 'Golden Spice' ripen now; most others in mid-late Sept.



### Harvesting rhubarb in fall

Harvest usually stops in late June, but a few stalks from vigorous plants can be harvested for a treat from now to frost. Stalks will be tougher than spring-harvested stalks. Do not harvest frosted stalks; they may be toxic.



### Pruning summer raspberries

Remove canes that bore fruit this summer; prune at ground level. Thin remaining canes. If grown in a hedge, thin canes to 3–4 inches apart. If grown in hills, thin to 6–8 canes per hill. Thinning can wait until March/April.



### Apple maggot

Fruits develop dimples (left) where flies laid eggs. Maggots hatch and create trails inside (right). Pick up fallen fruit. Hang traps in July to monitor for flies. Insecticides can protect fruits in future.



### Black rot on apple

Rake and remove rotted and fallen fruits. In March, prune out any dying branches. Make cuts several inches below where fungal cankers (orangish, discolored regions) appear.



### Hail damage on apple

Dented fruit may be kept on tree to ripen. The apples will not store long and are best used in sauces and pies. Remove bruises before eating/cooking. If skin is split open, remove and discard fruit to prevent diseases and pests.

## LAWNS



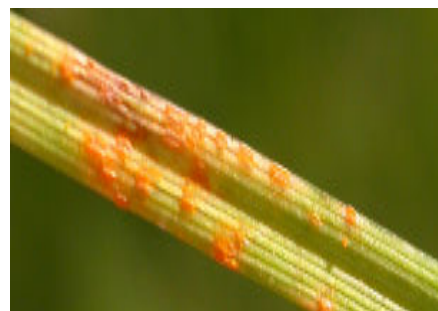
### Fertilize now

Early September is a good time to fertilize since autumn is when turf roots grow. The boost of potash in winterizer fertilizers will increase hardiness of the turf.



### Sow seed now

Now through mid-September is best time to seed/overseed. The ground is warm and seed germinates quickly. Rake soil; scatter seed; rake to cover seed. Keep moist for 3 weeks.



### Rust

Orange powder found on turf (and our shoes). Fertilize and irrigate (irrigate mornings only). Collect clippings. Fungicides (chlorothalonil) are rarely needed. Goes away in 2–3 weeks.

# Timely Topics in North Dakota Yards and Gardens

## VEGETABLES



### When to harvest cantaloupes?

A fully ripe fruit slips off the vine with a gentle tug. The entire stem comes out at *full-slip* (shown). Rind is yellowish. Farmers may harvest at *half-slip*; fruits come off with more pressure and half of the stem remains on the melon.



### When to harvest onions?

Harvest when tops have fallen over and shriveled. Keep in garden for a couple days to dry. Shake off loose dirt and cure bulbs in a warm (80°F), airy spot until necks are withered (2–4 weeks). Store in a cool, dry place.



### Colorado potato beetle

Beetles attack potato family, including eggplant, pepper and tomato. Pick larvae (inset) or adults and throw in pail of soapy water. Spinosad (best), carbaryl or pyrethrin sprays are most effective when pests are young.



### Tomato zippering

Thin, longitudinal scars are caused when anthers of blossoms get stuck on the fruit, scratching it as the fruit grows. These tomatoes are edible.



### Bacterial spot on tomato

Corky spots (diameter of pencil eraser) on fruits. Occurs under warm temps (mid 70s to 80s). Spots develop on vines. Stay out of garden (and wounding vines) when vines are wet. Copper sprays will prevent spread.



### Planting garlic

Hardneck cultivars are most hardy. Add 1 inch of compost or peat moss and 2.5 lbs of 10–10–10 per 100 ft<sup>2</sup>. Set cloves 2–3 inches deep; space 4–6 inches in rows 12–24 inches apart. Mulch with straw in November.

## MISCELLANEOUS PESTS



### Slugs

Apply iron phosphate baits. Sprinkle diatomaceous earth around perimeter of garden. Trap slugs using pie tins filled with beer or collect slugs from underneath boards set out as traps.



### Mosquitoes

Avoid going outdoors from dusk to dawn. Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks. Use repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus) on exposed skin and clothing.



### Grasshoppers

Control is most effective early in season. For now, protect veggies with carbaryl (Sevin), or shield with floating row covers. Spray perimeter of garden with carbaryl or a pyrethroid (Tempo).

# Weather Almanac for August 31–September 11, 2016

Site	TEMPERATURE				RAINFALL				GROWING DEGREE DAYS <sup>1,2</sup>			
	Aug 31–Sep 11				Aug31–Sep11		2016		Aug31–Sep11		2016	
	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	60	61	89	36	0.33	0.62	14.08	14.31	129	134	1890	1909
Bowman	64	62	92	42	1.01	0.46	11.27	12.34	155	146	2149	1977
Carrington	62	62	83	46	1.15	0.85	14.97	15.99	136	141	2021	2056
Crosby	62	59	91	41	1.46	0.51	13.27	12.25	133	131	1938	1772
Dickinson	63	61	90	40	1.29	0.59	10.54	13.53	149	147	2177	1954
Fargo	66	64	83	47	1.93	1.16	15.33	17.13	178	149	2380	2207
Grafton	63	61	84	45	2.69	1.08	25.53	16.40	155	136	2083	1918
Grand Forks	64	61	85	48	4.78	0.92	21.79	16.09	150	135	2166	1969
Hazen	64	63	90	42	1.22	0.58	14.99	13.61	153	157	2117	2146
Hillsboro	64	63	83	44	1.58	0.92	16.74	16.60	157	139	2190	2084
Jamestown	62	62	82	47	4.62	1.03	22.09	15.47	129	136	2050	2043
Langdon	61	59	79	45	1.09	0.76	20.18	15.58	131	117	1801	1644
Mandan	63	62	86	43	0.92	0.65	16.41	14.56	148	141	2159	2050
Minot	61	61	88	42	0.72	0.62	12.69	14.59	128	128	2020	1876
Mott	61	62	88	37	1.57	0.52	12.31	13.37	143	155	2058	2041
Rugby	62	60	86	41	0.61	0.73	13.32	15.82	143	134	2028	1902
Wahpeton	65	65	85	43	2.00	1.29	16.72	17.04	178	160	2299	2303
Watford City	64	61	93	42	1.32	0.43	9.27	12.00	145	142	2173	1969
Williston	64	64	96	43	0.94	0.52	9.85	11.70	148	159	2162	2220
Wishek	61	61	83	44	3.56	0.85	19.81	16.79	128	134	1992	1868

## DAYLENGTH (Sep 12, McClusky, center of ND)<sup>3</sup>

Sunrise: 7:15 AM | Daylength: 12h 46m  
 Sunset: 8:01 PM | Change since Aug 31: -40m

## LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS<sup>4</sup>

Sep 17–21: Temp.: Above Normal; Precip.: Below Normal  
 Sep 19–25: Temp.: Above Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

<sup>1</sup> GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F., respectively.

<sup>2,3,4</sup> Sources: North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, and National Weather Service, respectively.

## Credits

Dirr, M.A. 2009. Manual of woody landscape plants. Sixth ed. Stipes Publishing: Champaign. Ill.

Hoover, E., E.S. Tepe and D. Foulk. 2015. Growing apples in the home garden. Univ. of Minnesota Extension: Twin Cities.

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