

Growing Parrots in the Garden

The first frost is coming. It's time to plant tulips! Nothing can match the bright colors of tulips in springtime.

Our garden centers and online stores offer lots of different tulips. *Emperor* tulips bloom early—great when paired with daffodils. *Darwin Hybrids* have big flowers and sturdy stems. *Botanical* tulips have charming blossoms that look like water lilies.

This year, I invite you to try the tulips with the most dramatic blooms: the *parrots*.

Parrot tulips are absolutely fascinating. Their blooms are giant and feathery. The ruffled petals may be streaked with bright flames, stripes and splashes of color. Parrot tulips are stunning in the garden and incredible in bouquets.

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.

Now is the best time to plant tulips. You can plant until the ground freezes, but earlier planting leads to stronger roots and healthier growth.

Tulips demand a well-drained soil. Add and mix an inch of organic



matter (peat moss or compost) to the bed before planting. 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.

Parrot tulips grow best in sunny spots sheltered from high winds—their big blossoms may flop over in a windy area. A sunny spot will help the bulbs to regenerate themselves and come back the following spring. Parrot bulbs are short-lived; only about two or three years.

Parrot tulips may be planted in containers. Pot them up, keeping the tips of the bulbs near the soil surface. Space the bulbs closely, only about an inch apart. Water them and set the pots in an unheated garage. They will begin sprouting after 12–14 weeks. Bring them in the house and watch their beauty unfurl before your eyes!

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Plant Health Care

Backyard Bugs in Fall



Garden Spiders

These black and yellow spiders are active now in gardens and tall grasses. Although several inches long (and scary to some people), *Argiope* spiders are shy. They are beneficial because they capture many insect pests (*as shown*). In general, spiders found in our landscapes are not aggressive, and spider bites are rare. Leave spiders alone. Poisonous spiders are extremely rare in ND (it's too cold).



Monarchs

They have begun their flight to Mexico, a trek of over 2,500 miles. They'll fly 25 miles or more each day. Populations have declined in recent decades, but populations have been robust recently.



Boxelder Bugs

Bugs will congregate on sunny walls to stay warm. Seal crevices along doors and windows. Spray with 5 TBSP of detergent per gallon of water. Continue spraying as bugs appear.



Dagger Moth Caterpillars

These large (2-inch) caterpillars eat leaves of oak, ash, elm and other trees. Don't touch. They will sting you with their black bristles if touched. The bristles will go into your skin, release a toxin, and cause a mild rash.



Woolly Bear Caterpillars

Folklore states these caterpillars predict winter: the wider the brown band of hairs, the milder the winter. It's not true. A wide brown band suggests an older caterpillar that ate less this summer.



Aggressive Wasps

Populations soar until a hard frost kills them. Keep drink containers (*shown*) and garbage cans sealed. Destroy nests located in hazardous areas. Apply a knock-down spray in hole of nest. Spray at night; a cool night in the 50s is best.



Swarms of Winged Ants

These ants are mating. The females will later remove their wings and try to start a new nest. Outdoor swarms are harmless; leave alone or soak with soapy water. Indoor swarms may suggest an indoor nest; use baits containing boric acid.



Crickets

Seal windows, doors and the foundation. Reduce outdoor lighting. Remove debris near foundation. Insecticides may be sprayed near entries. Crickets die from frost. They will starve if they get indoors.

Plant Health Care

Fruits and Vegetables



Start a Strawberry Patch

Now is a good time to prepare land for next year's garden or berry patch. Spray glyphosate (Roundup) on turf or a weedy area. Cultivate the land in two weeks, mix in a little organic matter, and you will be ready for spring.



When to Harvest Pumpkins?

Harvest before a killing frost (28°F). Leave a few inches of stem attached. Do not bruise. Cure in a warm (80°F) spot for 10 days for long-term storage. Greenish-orange pumpkins will turn orange if exposed to sunlight.



Frosted Apples

Apples on trees can tolerate temps approaching 25°F before damage occurs. If they freeze, wait until they thaw before picking. Then use promptly.



Protect Tender Vegetables

The water inside of plant cells expand and burst open when frozen (like a soda in the freezer). Fruits will appear soaked. Cover tender veggies (tomato, pepper and vine crops) with blankets during light frosts. See frost dates on Page 5.



Scab on Potato

Bacteria create scars on tubers. Peel off scars. In future, prevent scab by keeping soil evenly moist for 4–6 weeks after flowers appear. Avoid fresh manure. Use resistant varieties such as 'Redgold', 'Superior' and 'Goldrush'.



Apple Maggot

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



Ripen Tomatoes Indoors

Place your blushing, crack-free fruits on a newspaper and then place another newspaper sheet over them. This traps ethylene, which fruits emit when ripening. Keep out of direct sun. Room temperatures develop fullest flavors.



Forked, Twisted Carrots

Usually found in rocky or compacted ground, or when fresh manure is used. A loose, fertile seed bed is critical. Thin seedlings to avoid overcrowding.

Plant Health Care

Lawns



Backyard Prairies

Kill grass/weeds now with glyphosate. Cultivate the soil two weeks later and prepare a seed bed. You may sow until the ground freezes. The seeds will germinate next spring. Select mixes from northern sources that match your soil type and moisture conditions.



Kill Perennial Weeds

The best time to kill clover, dandelion, thistle and other perennial weeds is in mid- to late September. The weeds will channel the herbicide down into their roots as they store energy for winter.



Sowing Grass Seed

Sowing is risky, especially in north. Mid-September is the recommended deadline. Keep soil moist to promote quick establishment. An alternative is to sow in November; the seed will sprout in spring.



Toadflax

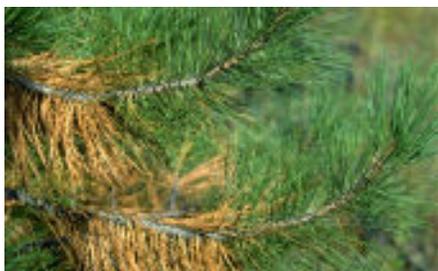
In lawns, use a herbicide containing dicamba now and/or when toadflax is blooming. Repeated sprays will be needed. In gardens, use a hoe or spray with glyphosate. Use picloram (Tordon) in non-crop areas and roadsides.



Mushrooms

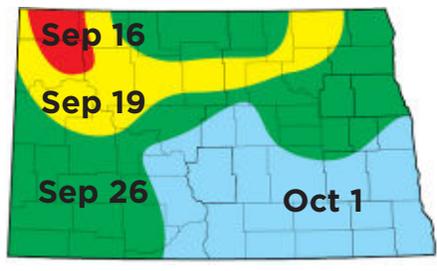
Recent rains created this outbreak. The mushrooms are decomposing organic matter in soil. It's natural and can't be stopped. Leave them alone or rake. Do not eat. No pesticide spray is useful.

Trees and Shrubs



Fall Needle Drop

Old needles (located near the trunk) are *supposed* to drop. If young needles (located near the tips of branches) are healthy, the tree is full of life.



Planting Trees in Fall

Plant trees early enough to allow several weeks of root growth and recovery. Ideal planting dates are shown. Chances of success diminish later in the year, particularly with evergreens.



Kill Tree Seedlings

Spray leaves, or prune at base and soak the wounded base with herbicide. Use triclopyr and/or glyphosate. The trees will move the herbicide down into their roots as they store energy for winter.

Weather Almanac for September 19–25, 2019

Site	AVG FROST ^{1,2}		TEMPERATURE ²				RAINFALL ^{2,4}				GROWING DEGREE DAYS ^{2,5}			
	Light	Killing	Sep 19–25				Sep 19–25		2019		Sep 19–25		2019	
	(32°F)	(28°F)	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	9/21	09/27	58	53	80	38	2.31	0.33	16.09	13.03	62	50	1887	2039
Bowman	9/18	09/30	56	54	82	38	0.20	0.32	14.04	11.05	55	56	1910	2121
Carrington	9/26	10/05	62	55	88	45	3.62	0.39	19.70	15.02	75	55	1977	2196
Crosby	9/22	09/29	57	52	80	39	0.52	0.27	17.03	11.34	54	46	1840	1894
Dickinson	9/22	10/03	58	53	81	40	0.25	0.36	17.38	12.65	60	57	1999	2101
Fargo	9/27	10/05	66	56	89	50	0.44	0.51	18.32	15.61	93	54	2336	2347
Grafton	9/24	10/04	61	54	79	40	1.73	0.50	11.06	15.30	70	52	2058	2052
Grand Forks	9/20	10/05	63	54	89	46	4.43	0.44	20.95	14.93	80	51	2037	2101
Hazen	9/14	09/27 ⁶	59	56	80	40	1.29	0.34	19.81	12.79	66	64	1989	2309
Hillsboro	9/28	10/06	63	55	87	44	3.77	0.46	20.62	15.30	82	51	2118	2217
Jamestown	9/25	10/04	62	55	85	46	1.80	0.46	18.78	14.63	71	51	1947	2176
Langdon	9/17	09/28	58	51	75	40	2.28	0.42	13.83	14.90	57	42	1752	1754
Mandan	9/23	10/01	61	55	83	42	1.70	0.34	18.10	13.82	73	54	2067	2188
Minot	9/28	10/07	59	54	79	41	1.70	0.33	15.51	13.08	60	46	1940	1996
Mott	9/18	09/28	57	54	80	38	0.53	0.32	19.80	11.89	63	60	1967	2195
Rugby	9/21	10/04	59	53	81	42	1.19	0.42	11.96	14.64	68	51	1945	2033
Wahpeton	9/27	10/04 ⁷	65	58	87	49	0.10	0.62	18.59	16.31	92	58	2230	2452
Watford City	9/14	09/25	58	54	80	42	0.58	0.23	15.14	10.89	57	56	2021	2111
Williston	9/22	09/29	59	57	80	42	0.54	0.27	18.37	10.84	59	63	2044	2381
Wishek	9/18	09/27	60	54	82	41	0.38	0.29	19.65	12.53	69	50	1882	1998

DAYLENGTH (Sep 26, McClusky, center of ND)³ LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS¹

Sunrise: 7:33 AM Daylength: 12h 1m Oct 2–6: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal
 Sunset: 7:34 PM Change since Sep 19: –24m Oct 4–10: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

^{1,2,3}Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, respectively.

⁴Measurements begin April 1.

⁵GDDs 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.

^{6,7}Frost data for Beulah and Campbell, respectively.

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