

## Planting Suggestions for Landscape Ornamentals

by Tamara M. Pedersen, Professional Turf Specialties, reprinted from the Heart of America GCSA

Autumn is here!

With the golf season winding down, many superintendents are thinking about plans to beautify the course with various species of ornamental plants. Before you write a purchase order to the nursery or garden center, take time to plan carefully and to prepare the soil adequately. When planning which plants to use, consider variety, time of bloom, form, texture, color and balance. Send soil samples to the lab to give a clear indication of pH and nutrient deficiencies. Add the proper soil amendments to adjust pH for your growing situation. Remember that soil texture, degree of pH and type of amendment are all factors in the slow process of correcting pH. In the fall, incorporate a good slow-release landscape fertilizer, with micronutrients as recommended from soil tests. The addition of peat moss is always a good idea to increase the organic matter content of the landscape bed.

Once your plans are made and the soil is prepared, it is time for fall planting.

**Bulbs.** Select spring flowering bulbs and begin to plant daffodils, narcissus, hyacinths and crocus in September and October. Store tulip bulbs in moderate refrigeration for planting around Halloween. There are organic fertilizers available containing manures, sunflower ash and bone meal, which are excellent to use in bulb plantings.

**Mums.** Early fall is the season to set out chrysanthemums. Try to plant mums before blooms open, if you desire them to live as a perennial in the landscape. They will have more time to root before the plant's energy resources are used up in the flowering. After

blooms are spent, cut back to about six inches and mulch well. Divide old perennials such as day lilies, hosta and ferns to transplant now. Consider planting drifts of spring flowering bulbs among these herbaceous perennials. The leaves of these plants will cover the dying foliage of bulbs after spring blooms are spent. Most ground covers can be planted at any time during the growing season, except English ivy, which has been recommended in the literature to be planted in the fall. In September, sow seeds of hardy annuals in landscape beds such as candytuft, California poppy, clarkia, sweet alyssum, cosmos, pinks, larkspur, snapdragon, sweet pea, pansy, calendula and cornflower for bloom next year. Plant new peony bushes now for bloom in May. The summer blooming bulbs, allium and fritillaria, are typically planted in the early fall. These flowering and foliage species can add beauty to the landscape by accenting the trees and shrubs with showy color throughout the season.

There are many woody

ornamentals which should be planted in early fall. Some shrubs to avoid planting late are leather-leaf viburnum, wintergreen barberry, cotoneaster, Japanese holly, American holly, Japanese black pine, yews, azaleas and rhododendron. Evergreens that should be planted in early fall include: pines, spruce and junipers. It is important that these species experience at least four weeks of soil temperatures above 40 degrees F, to allow for sufficient root growth and to minimize transplant shock. There are root stimulators available to use at planting, which enhance root growth and vigor. Wait until late fall to plant deciduous trees. They should have dropped their leaves and have begun dormancy by November. Dig holes now and amend the soil with organic matter before the ground becomes hard with freeze. Don't forget that some trees can easily be propagated from seed. Collect a few acorns this fall which can be directly seeded in the natural landscape.

There are some exceptions to



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*Ornamentals, from page 4*

the "Fall is for planting" rule of a green thumb. Most container-grown nursery plants can be planted from early spring to fall. Among these are most ground covers and new perennials. If these are planted in the fall, they should be adequately mulched to prevent frost heaving. Many garden centers have a variety of summer blooming bulbs available in spring. Pay close attention to planting dates for each species to avoid loss by an early frost. As a rule, most broadleaf evergreens and spring flowering trees should be planted in early spring as soon as the ground can be worked. Among the species recommended for spring planting are fir, maple, pawpaw, American hornbeam, hackberry, katsuratree, fringetree, filbert, hawthorn, cypress, hickories, nootka, walnut, larch, beech, holly, goldenraintree, tuliptree, magnolia, blackgum, corktree, American ironwood, cherry, pear, oaks, sassafras, zelkova, bald cypress, stewartias and sweetgum. Some common landscape trees which have recommendations for spring or fall planting are river birch, redbud, falsecypress, yellowwood, hemlock and white cedar. These species are not all suitable as golf course trees because of leaf size and litter problems.

Keep these planting suggestions in mind this fall as you plan landscaped areas on the golf course. Test the soil, add amendments and fertilize to prepare soil for long-term success. Mulch new plantings to conserve moisture and give the bed a fresh, finished look. Enjoy the fall weather, and good luck with your landscape plans.



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*See Ciba, page 8, col 2*



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