

Academy Garden Club Thymes

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY GARDEN CLUB OF LENOX

OCTOBER 2019

Hello AGC Members,

We are into the most beautiful time of the Berkshires' year, at least in my mind. The color is just beginning, the nights are cool and cooler, and the early morning sun has a special glitter. And not enough leaves have fallen to get us to have to start raking, at least not yet!

Many thanks to all of us for such a delicious Harvest Dinner last month, (I am still savoring those lemon cookies!), and to Terry Michney for leading us once again in a pretty hilarious paper bag raffle!

But most thanks of all go to our Fund Raising Committee so ably led by Theresa Fasano. Our booth at the Apple Squeeze netted us \$614.00! Jan Chague described it best. She said, "It is amazing the way the mounds of flowers and paraphernalia gathered on Friday comes together like magic; our booth was absolutely beautiful, a real eye catcher!"

In the end, everything was sold. The hydrangeas were most popular and the adorable tiny terrariums (thanks, Terry Michney) were a big hit with the youngest Apple Squeezers!

This month is a busy time for our gardens. According the Maine Home Garden News, it's time to bring in those tender bulbs, corms and tubers (Dahlias!) to be cleaned off and stored for next year; to start gathering spring bulbs for planting, and to clean up plant debris from the vegetable gardens to help prevent diseases and pests next year.

This is also a good time to think ahead to what you might want to change for next year. An idea I was just given in one of my photography groups is to photograph areas in your garden that you want to change so that when you are planting early next spring you can know what is where even if it hasn't yet come up!

Our next meeting, Tuesday, October 8th at 7:00, will feature Chris Ferrero, Master Gardener, who will talk to us about gardening despite our touchy knees and aching hips! Here's to ergonomic raking! I look forward to seeing you all!

Sincerely,
Harriet Wetstone
AGC President

* * * * *

HORTICULTURAL COLUMN

By Harriet Wetstone

It's almost bulb planting time! I have gotten up all my courage and pulled out four Hayes Starburst Hydrangeas that I have been really unhappy with (and had my dissatisfaction corroborated by a plantsman who has never liked their floppy growth and beautiful but short lived blooms), and that means a lovely space opened up for a new spring bulb garden. So in contemplating what I would plant, I decided to revisit the bulbs, corms, tubers and rhizomes question and make sure I knew what I was going for. (You all probably know this cold!)



According to the University of Minnesota Extension, the term "bulb" includes corms, tuberous roots, rhizomes and true bulbs. However, according to the Gardening Cook, these various flower bulb types are better described as geophytes.

Academy Garden Club Thymes

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY GARDEN CLUB OF LENOX

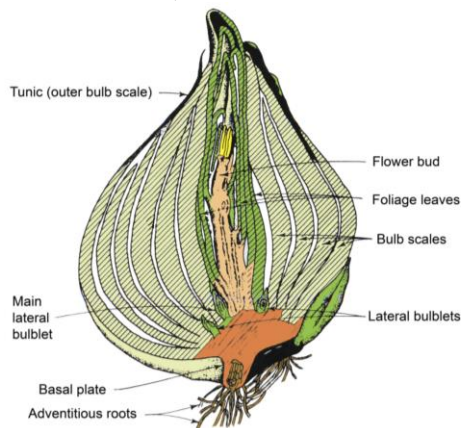
OCTOBER 2019

PAGE TWO

Horticultural Column – continued

And geophytes are underground storage units with growing points which often flower in spring, but can grow into plants even under unfavorable conditions (witness the potatoes or onions we don't get around to using which start growing in the veg drawer in the fridge).

A true bulb consists of a series of fleshy layers (yes, onion!), but these fleshy layers are actually leaves! There are tunicate bulbs which have papery outer skin (tulips and onions), and imbricate bulbs (e.g. lilies), which don't have a covering and need to stay moist before planting. There are also bulbets - baby bulbs which grow next to a mother bulb such as with daffodils, which is how they spread. Tiger lilies will produce tiny bulbs on their stems, and alliums will form bulbets in their flower heads! Besides tulips and alliums, hyacinths, snowdrops, amaryllis, daffodils, and some but not all lilies, are all true bulbs.



Tulips are a part of the Liliaceae family which includes lilies, onions, garlic and asparagus, and I was fascinated to learn that tulip bulbs were eaten during war time, particularly in Holland. They had to be carefully cleaned, and the little yellow center removed as it was toxic, but otherwise the tulip bulbs were boiled and eaten like onions. It is said that fresh tulip bulbs have a sweet milky flavor, but older dryer ones were not very pleasant. (Death from tulip bulb consumption via a glycoside was rare, but it happened, particularly during World War II).

A corm has a solid mass of stem tissue rather than the rings or layers that bulbs have, and smaller cormlets will often grow next to the mother corm, just as with bulbs, and this is how they spread. Examples of corms are crocus, gladiolus, liatris, jack in the pulpit, some types of begonias, and bananas.



Rhizomes are really swollen stems which grow horizontally near the surface of the soil and produce lots of buds along their surface. Calla lilies, bearded irises, ginger, lily of the valley, agapanthus, turmeric, and water lilies all grow from rhizomes.

Tubers are also swollen stems and they have growth nodes or eyes. A tuber could be described as the swollen tip of a rhizome. Unlike corms and bulbs they do not throw off babies, they just get larger every year. But you can propagate tubers by planting a piece that has some healthy eyes. Examples of tubers are cyclamen, canna lilies, caladium, anemone, and peony.

There are also tuberous roots. These thickened roots hold the food source for the plant to come, just as all the other geophytes. Clivia, dahlias, sweet potato, tuberous begonias and daylilies all grow from tuberous roots.

Well, I am glad I got that straight! Now onto a color scheme - I am thinking swaths of different purples!

Thanks to: www.fluwel.com;
www.eattheweeds.com; thegardeningcook.com;
extension.umn.edu; and www.gardenista.com.