

I'm happy to report that I visited Valley Nursery and am now the proud owner of not only one but two *Callicarpa bodinieri* 'Profusion' and one *Chlorodendrum trichotomum* (Harlequin Glorybower). I went there to buy one plant and came home with three. Sound familiar to any of you? Cheryl Leach, one of the founders of Pousbo Garden Club, and president of PPA "Plant Purchasers Anonymous" accompanied me saying, "Callicarpa produce more of their lavender berries if you have more than one plant." Well any excuse to add more plants I always say.

In keeping with the PPA tradition Cheryl happily gave a new home to a "super hardy" dainty pink camellia. Valley has one-gallon pots of these darling sweet smelling varieties. The "super hardies" also come in white. They're in bloom now. The pink's fragrance is semi-honeysuckle and the white's is semi-gardenia. These new, as yet unnamed, camellias are ideal for containers.

Add some native plants to your gardens this fall. Kathleen Barrantes shared this fantastic web site with me. It's gardening.wsu.edu/nwnative. This Pierce County WSU Cooperative Extension site is extremely detailed. You'll find everything you'll want to know about native plants at this site, including color photos and plant-care information. Remember if you don't have a computer to access web sites, our local libraries have them for your use.

Have you planted your bulbs yet? I haven't either but plan to very soon, as in this weekend, rain or shine. So far I've purchased tiny crocus bulbs called *Crocus Sativus*. They're the saffron crocus used for spice and dye. When I bought them I was told they would bloom in six weeks. They've been in our cold garage and are starting to grow roots and white stems. Yikes! I need to get these poor babies into the ground. It even says "Plant before the ground freezes." Not a problem here though, but the frost wouldn't be too kind to them. I'll give you a report in future weeks in one of my "true confessions" columns.

I'm also going to plant Oriental hyacinths (bought 24), purple 36-inch tall allium (bought 50) and 12-inch tall yellow and hot pink allium (50 of each color) and finally *Camassia* (bought 25). I would have continued buying bulbs but my sweet husband said, "Remember you'll need to dig holes and plant all of them." The *Camassia* are a beautiful sky blue and belong to the Liliaceae family. Each bulb produces 8 to 24-inch tall stems covered with blue star-shaped flowers. I can hardly wait until spring now. The packages containing my allium bulbs have the phrase "Deer Won't Eat" emblazoned on them. So if deer are a problem in your garden, try some allium bulbs.

My favorite way to plant bulbs is to dig up a big area and then throw the bulbs in (actually gently scatter them). Plant your bulbs with pointy sides up and flat bottoms down. Make sure that each bulb is deep enough for the soil to cover it two to three times higher than the bulb is fat. So if your bulb is one inch wide, cover it with two to three inches of soil. Planting the bulbs this deep helps deter munching critters, insulates the bulbs and, in spring, stems won't flop over as much

You can also layer bulbs in the planting holes. Put the bigger bulbs on the bottom, layer a bit of soil and place smaller bulbs on top, covering again with the soil. A great blue and yellow combination is daffodils on the bottom with Grape hyacinths (*Muscari armeniacum*) on top. The daffodils bloom from February through late March and the *Muscari* bloom from March through sometimes May.

Be sure to select a sunny well-draining site. Many gardeners mix in a little bone meal, blood meal, or kelp. I've used bone meal and I've used nothing and all my bulbs do fine. It's your choice. The first year each plump bulb already has stored within all it needs for its first year of growth and flowering. If you use bulb starters or fertilizers be sure to cover the amendments up with a little soil first or you might burn your bulbs.

See if your husband/wife will loan you his/her electric/battery-operated drill motor and find an auger attachment at the hardware store. So far I've seen three gardening programs on television demonstrating hole digging using the auger. You pop the auger on, drill a hole in the soil, pop in a bulb, fill up the hole and move on to the next bulb planting spot. Looks like fun. See if you can locate one of these handy drill bit attachments and go play in your garden with your bulbs. If I keep procrastinating I might have to go find one myself.

You can email comments to Peg at gardenmentor@yahoo.com or in care of this newspaper.