

from
Store
to
Garden

*101 ways to make the most of
garden store purchases*

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101 Ways to Make the Most of Garden Store Purchases



Annual flowers. These come in flats or pots and are usually planted in the spring of the year. They die off with the first hard frost in the fall. Plant in the spring after the danger of frost has passed. Annuals are usually sold in flats of 48 or 72 plants, or in individual cell packs of 4-6 plants. Purchase plants that are properly labeled, look healthy and are free of insect infestation.



Books. If you're as passionate about gardening as I am, you'll want some gardening books to reference or to sit back and read for the sheer pleasure; however, you could spend a fortune buying garden books. If I could purchase only one garden book, it would be the American Horticulture Society's *A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*. Not only will you have access to over 15000 plants and 6000 color photographs, there is also a reference to some of the garden basics such as pruning and propagation. A good book for organic vegetable gardening is *Rodale's Ultimate Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening: The Indispensable Green Resource for Every Gardener*, by Fern Marshall Bradley, Barbara Ellis, and Ellen Phillips. For pure enjoyment and information I recommend Michael Pollan's books, including *Botany of Desire* and *Omnivore's Dilemma*. You can pick up a lot of good garden reference books at thrift stores. And of course, for cold climate gardeners, I'd have to recommend my book, *North Country Gardening: Simple Secrets to Successful Northern Gardening*.



Bulbs. Only purchase firm bulbs--no exceptions! A bulb that is starting to get soft is losing the food source that it needs to shoot up a stem and eventually a beautiful flower. Tulips, daffodils, scilla, hyacinth, crocus and muscari are planted in the **fall** before the ground freezes; lilies, gladiolus, calla, and amaryllis are planted in early **spring** just after the ground thaws. Some bulbs, such as gladiolus, calla and amaryllis need to be dug up in the fall in northern climates where they won't survive over the winter.



Bulb planter. Don't plant another bulb without a bulb planter! This handy tool makes the job of planting bulbs much easier. You simply push the planter down into the ground, pull out a clod of soil, drop in the bulb, and release the clod of soil back in the hole. There are two types of bulb planters, an inexpensive 8 inch bulb planter that you'll have to get down on your hands and knees to use, or a much longer one that allows you to push it down with your foot without having to bend over too far.



Compost. Compost and other soil amendments are essential to growing a good flower or veggie garden. You can buy compost by the bag for easy application. Work it into the top 4-6 inches of soil. Compost helps hold moisture and nutrients in the soil. Add a 4-inch layer of compost in your planting bed yearly. See "Compost bin" below for suggestions on choosing a compost bin for making your own compost.

Sources for Quality Garden Tools

A. M. Leonard:

www.amleo.com

Ace Hardware:

www.acehardware.com

Gardener's Supply Company:

www.gardeners.com

Mantis:

www.mantis.com