

Still time for final garden chores

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How did it get to be the holidays already? This is probably the latest I have ever been in getting my garden cleaned up for fall.

Last week, before the rains came, I was able to dig up cannas, dahlias and my colocasia bulbs. I didn't have time to get them stored properly so I have them laying out in crates in the garage.

IF you haven't dug summer-flowering bulbs, do so immediately. They can't take cold temperatures or the bulbs rot. They don't like wet soil either.

Proper storage for your summer-blooming bulbs means in general, that you keep them in a cool, dry location. Don't subject them to moisture or sealed containers.

The garage is usually the best place to store these bulbs. If the garage is not heated and not attached to the house, you may want to insulate the containers so that they don't get below freezing.

Homes with the garage attached are perfect, as long as they aren't heated during the winter.

Cannas are really easy to store. Simply dig them and place them in a cardboard box or bushel basket.

Dahlias on the other hand take a little more protection. Don't let the tubers dry out. They store best in either sawdust or peat moss.

Check them periodically to ensure they haven't dried out. If they start to shrivel up, they are drying out.

Remove the tubers from the peat moss and mist them to add a bit of moisture. Place them back in the peat. Don't spray the peat as this can lead to rotting of the tubers.

The above recommendation is for really serious dahlia growers. I am not a really serious dahlia grower however. I don't check mine during the winter and they usually do just fine. If I do have a few tubers dry out, I'll toss them in the compost and buy more.

If you have other summer-flowering bulbs, check out resources to determine the best storage method.

In addition, if you haven't planted your spring-blooming bulbs by now, there is still time! I have a few bags laying around my garage that I purchased in September and forgot to plant.

The best time to plant them in is October and November but I have planted them as late as the end of December and they do just fine.

I have also planted them in the spring, after finding them in my trunk. I had a few bags of daffodils get lost in the back of my trunk for the winter and thus, when I discovered them in the spring, I planted them.

They didn't bloom perfectly that year but they eventually looked good.

If you find them in the spring and they are dried out, it's too late!



Dahlia tubers ready for storage



Spring blooming bulbs such as crocus should be planted as soon as possible