

### **DIGGING AND STORING SUMMER-FLOWERING BULBS**

Summer-flowering plants such as gladiolus, dahlia, canna, and tuberous begonia will freeze if left in the ground all winter, and must be removed before a hard frost occurs, usually around October 15, in Washtenaw County.

Dig gladiolus bulbs about six weeks after the plants have bloomed. Wash the soil off the bulbs and let them dry. After gladiolus bulbs have dried store them in a dry, well ventilated area at a temperature between 40 and 45 degrees. Inspect bulbs periodically for disease. Dusting them with a fungicide may minimize diseases.

Lift dahlia roots or tubers, as they are actually called, when the tops have been killed by frost. Cut the stem to six inches before digging the tubers. When digging, remove as much soil as possible from the roots. After allowing the tubers to dry, store dahlias in a dry, 50 degree area. If the storage area is very dry, put the root clusters in a box and cover them with sand or peat moss. You can also wrap them in newspaper.

Dig canna rhizomes after the first light frost. Before digging, cut the stems back to six to eight inches. Let the roots dry with the soil left on them. Store cannas in peat moss in a dark location at 45 to 50 degrees.

Dig tuberous begonias after the first frost blackens the leaves. Spread the tubers in the sun to dry for a few days while the tops are still attached. Then cut off the tops to within one inch of the top of the tuber. Shake off the soil and arrange tubers in trays or shallow boxes and cover with dry peat moss or sand and store at 45 to 55 degrees F.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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