



Tracks

Volume 25, Issue 1

Inside this issue:

News.....	2
Nature Center and Other Programs.....	3-4
Mud Pies: Preschool Activities.....	5

By David Markham, Communications Specialist for JCPRD

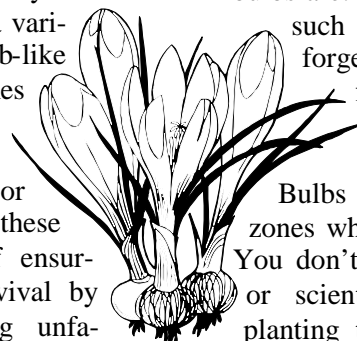
Types of Bulbs

Want to have a dazzling display of colorful flowers in your yard next spring?

If so, start thinking now about planting spring bulbs.

In our area, September through November is the ideal time to plant bulbs for next year's flowers. Bulbs are a garden's sleeping beauties which reward the grower with spring blooms.

Some bulbs have the shape of an upside-down light bulb, while others look more like a dry brown onion. There are also a variety of other bulb-like structures with names like corms, tubers, and rhizomes. But whatever their name or appearance, all of these serve the function of ensuring the plant's survival by storing food during unfavorably cold or dry conditions.



One of my favorite memories of winters past is seeing the crocus flowers come up through the snow and open their bright yellow or purple petals in stark contrast to the ice crystals. It was a sign that spring was breaking through and was on its way.

Crocuses are one of the earliest-blooming spring flowering bulbs. Other popular spring bulbs are daffodils, narcissus, tulips, and hyacinths. With a little planning, you can select bulbs which ensure you have constant flowers in your yard well into summer. Other flowering bulbs are: irises, ornamental onions such as alium, wind flowers, forget-me-nots, polyanthus, fritillaria, lilies, and primroses.

Bulbs are very easy to grow in zones where the winters are cold. You don't have to be experienced or scientifically exact in bulb planting to get good results, but good drainage is essential.

Depending on the species, spring bulbs bloom from late winter to early summer. After blooming is finished, the plant continues to grow and store food for a period of time before dying back to the ground and becoming dormant through the hottest weeks of summer. In the fall, the bulbs start to grow roots again and some may even grow leaves, but this is all in preparation for the real show in the spring.

Most outdoor bulbs require 12 to 16 weeks of chilling in the ground to produce flowers. Bulbs that don't receive adequate chilling may exhibit small blooms which grow close to the ground on short stems.

Experts tell us that bulbs grow best in full or partial sun, and that flowers last longer if they do not receive midday sun.

When you choose bulbs, look for ones that are firm without mold or bruising. Until you can plant them, store them in a cool area below 60 degrees.

Different types of bulbs have different preferred planting depths beneath the ground. Consult the instructions which come with your bulbs, but as a general rule, bulbs should be planted three to four times the width of the bulb. After planting, mulching is recommended

Nature Center News

NEW PARK NATURALIST!



We are delighted to have Elaine Giessel as our new Park Naturalist. Elaine has been a part-time staff member at Ernie Miller as a camp counselor, Heritage History Lab facilitator and part-time naturalist in addition to volunteering. Her past experiences include teaching at the Community College level, ecological consulting, Environmental Resources Coordinator and volunteer at the Texas Zoo.

WE WILL MISS YOU CHRIS!

Former Park Naturalist Chris Pistole will be starting a new position as Education Director at the Wild Glades Conservation and Audubon Center in Joplin, Missouri. Chris worked at the Nature Center for over 6 years. We wish him the best in his newest endeavor.



OTHER GREAT NEWS

Welcome new volunteers Bob Breyfogle and Sheree Ibrahim.

We send a special thank you to the Hillsdale Water Quality Project for hosting a great Water Festival for our Outdoor Discovery Camp.

WE WANT YOU . . .



TO BE A VOLUNTEER!

- **Meet interesting people!**
- **Help us maintain fascinating creatures!**
- **Lead people through the wilds of Ernie Miller Park!**
- **Learn cool stuff about nature and history!**

BE PART OF THE FEW, THE PROUD, THE ERNIE MILLER PARK VOLUNTEERS!

Must be at least 18 years old.
Call (913) 764-8580 x 23 or 26 for more information.

Main story cont.

and be sure to “water in” the bulbs so they can form roots quickly. Failure of bulbs to bloom is frustrating and can have a variety of causes. Experts say bulbs may rot if they stay wet for too long. Bulbs can also stop blooming if they become overcrowded or shaded too heavily. Sparse blooming is sometimes due to being planted too shallow.

If the plant’s leaves are cut off too soon in the spring, the bulb may not store enough food to bloom the following year. Gardeners know to leave the leaves on the plant for at least six weeks after blooming is finished or until they turn brown. This allows energy from the leaves to build up in the bulb in preparation for next year’s bloom.

This also means that if you plant daffodils to sprout through your grass in your lawn, you can’t mow the foliage until it “ripens” or dies back naturally, usually in early to mid-July in our area. People who don’t like the looks of the yellowing leaves sometimes tie them back without breaking them, or plant perennials around them for camouflage.

Do remove dead flower heads to discourage self-seeding, as it reduces the number of flowers your plants will produce.

Don’t plant your bulbs in containers and leave them outdoors and expect them to bloom the next spring. Unlike bulbs properly planted in the ground, bulbs in containers are subject to freezing and thawing. If you must plant bulbs in containers, move the containers into a garage or other location where the temperature is about 40 degrees, and

then bring them outside in about mid-March.

Forcing Bulbs

Many spring-flowering bulbs can be grown indoors and “forced” to bloom during the winter. Favorites for this purpose are crocuses, daffodils, hyacinths, tulips, amaryllis, and narcissus.

To force bulbs, plant them with a potting soil mix in a container with drainage holes. Allow for at least an inch of soil below the bulbs and leave them half-covered with soil and the pointed end facing upward. Because most bulbs require a cool dormancy period of five to 12 weeks, place them in a cool, dark place such as a refrigerator, unheated attic, or an attached garage. It is important that the temperature not go below freezing or above 45 degrees. The soil should be kept moist and checked every week or so. Once the bulbs show signs of shoot development, they should be moved into a warmer and brightly-lit location. Because a forced bulb uses all its energy in order to bloom out of season, they cannot be forced again and are usually discarded after blooming.

One type of bulb which does not require a cold dormancy period during forcing is the paperwhite narcissus, which will bloom in just a few weeks after planting.

Remember, flowering bulbs mark the passing of winter and the promise of spring and summer. Most will grow on for years and years after planting and becoming “naturalized.” Even though summer may not yet be entirely gone, planting bulbs in the fall ensures blooms for next spring.

Nature Center Programs

Some of the following nature center programs require preregistration unless otherwise noted. Visit www.jcprd.com or call (913) 831-3359 Voice or (913) 831-3342 TDD to register. 10% discount for Johnson County residents (on preregistered programs only) 1st price listed: county residents / 2nd price: non-residents.

For a complete listing of programs, see the JCPRD Activities Catalog or visit www.jcprd.com

SPECIAL EVENTS

History: Kansas Pioneer Girl Day (Ages 7 and Older and must be accompanied by Parent/Guardian or one adult chaperone per group of 5) Saturday, Sept. 23, 10 am-12 pm

Step back in time to remember and celebrate the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder. "Little House on the Prairie" was based on Laura's childhood experiences in Kansas. Participants are encouraged to dress like Laura and wear pioneer clothing. Move to different stations for old-fashioned games and activities that are sure to delight and intrigue. Try making rag dolls, finger knitting, braiding hair and using feather quills. Music from the time-period and stories of Laura's adventures will entertain visitors throughout the day. **For reservations and more information call (913) 764-7759.**

1-2hr. event - \$3 per person (including adults) Paid at site. Reservations required.



Halloween: Enchanted Forest (Ages 11 and Under & must be accompanied by Parent/Guardian), Saturday, Oct. 21, 1-4 pm

There's nothing scary about this walk in the woods. Enjoy a walk on the trail with the award-winning Nature Center staff. Costumed characters will delight and entertain audiences of all ages. Meet the Good Fairy and Bunny FOO FOO. Visit with Little Miss Muffet and Goldilocks. Live animals, stories, songs, and surprises will highlight childhood favorites. **Reservations are required. For more information and to register call (913) 764-7759.**

1-3hr. event - \$3 per person (including adults) Paid at site.

Birding: Owl Prowl (Ages 16 & Older and children ages 5 & up accompanied by Parent/Guardian)

Fri., Nov. 3 & Sat., Nov. 4, 6:30 m
Whoooo makes his home in Ernie Miller Nature Park? Who else but the Great Horned, Barred, and Screech Owls. Come for an informative talk featuring two live owls and an evening hike through the park. You'll never know whooo you might spot! Come dressed for the weather and warm up with a cup of hot cider after the hike. Instructor: Interpretive Staff.
1-90 min. session - \$7 (\$8 nonresidents) per person
64-2108-016-02 11/3 Fri. 6:30 pm
64-2108-016-03 11/4 Sat. 6:30 pm
Preregistration required.



Storytelling: Stories by Fireside

Sat., Oct. 28, 6-7 pm or 7:30-8:30 pm

Mysterious lights, haunted places, unexplained events. Everyone loves a spooky story. Your imagination will be sparked with chilling stories told by the fireside. **Call (913) 764-7759 for reservations.**

Not-so-Scary Stories: (Ages 9 & Under & must be accompanied by Parent/Guardian). 6-7pm,

Scariest Stories: (Ages 10 & Older & must be accompanied by Parent/Guardian). 7:30-8:30 pm



Tellabration★2006 Saturday, Nov. 18, 10:30-11:30 am

Want to hear a good story? Come celebrate the International Day of storytelling at the Ernie Miller Nature Center. Hear nature stories with live animals. These stories will combine themes of environmental awareness and ancient myths. They will delight audiences of all ages.

1-1 hr. event - \$2 per person (including adults) Paid at site.

ADULT



Map & Compass: Orienteering Workshop (Ages 16 & Older)

Saturday, Sept. 23 9 am-12 pm

Do you like to hike cross-country but fear losing your way? This beginner's workshop introduces you to orienteering, a fun way of learning the basic skills for using a topographic map and a magnetic compass. This class includes a practice orienteering hike in the park. Workbook and loan of compass are provided. Dress for the weather. Instructor: Possum Trot Orienteering Club.

1-3 hr. session-\$21(\$23 nonresidents)

64-2112-016-01 9/23 Sat. 9 am

Preregistration required.

Storytelling Workshop (Ages 18 & Older) Sat., Nov. 18, 1-3 pm

This two-hour workshop will open the world of storytelling possibilities to you. From the cradle to corporate settings, tap into the amazing power of storytelling to educate, entertain, enlighten, and empower. Learn how to reach out through the magic of stories. Parents and teachers, explore the use of stories to preserve family history and enhance school curriculum. Anyone can become a storyteller! Facilitated by award-winning storyteller and Park Naturalist, Molly Postlewait. Participants will receive handouts and a professionally-produced CD. For more information call (913) 764-8580 x 26.

1-2 hr. session - \$20 per person (\$22 nonresidents) includes storytelling CD

64-2103-016-01 11/18 Sat. 1-3 pm

Preregistration required.

Nature Center Programs

PRESCHOOL

Bring your preschooler to Ernie Miller Park on Saturdays this fall and enjoy the changing the changing colors of the season! Your child will have fun while experiencing natural and cultural history first-hand with a Park Naturalist. **Pre-registration required.**

Preschool: Fall Fun 2 – Pioneer Days, Sat., Oct. 7, 9:30-11 am

Step back 100 years into a child's life on the pioneer prairie. Scrub on a washboard, churn sweet butter, play a game of Fox & Geese, and hear stories told around the fireside.

1-90 min. session - \$11 (\$12 non-residents)

64-2142-016-03 10/7 Sat. 9:30 am

Preschool: Fall Fun 3 - The First Thanksgiving, Sat. Nov. 4, 9:30-11 am

Meet Patience, a Pilgrim woman, who will teach you about the Mayflower, the Native Americans, and the many trying times of Plymouth. Help prepare a Thanksgiving snack.

1-90 min. session - \$11 (\$12 non-residents)

64-2142-016-04 11/4 Sat. 9:30 am



OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Preregistration required. Cancellation Policy: No refunds within ten business days of trip unless a replacement can be found.

Birding Trip: Squaw Creek (Ages 18 & Older and children accompanied by Parent/Guardian)



Let's go birdwatching in Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Enjoy a day of birdwatching viewing all the ducks, geese and other wildlife that make Squaw Creek their home. It should be a great

year for Snow Geese. Their continental population is over 6 million birds which should make for a great fall migration. We will eat lunch at Camp Rulo in Rulo, NE. (Lunch is on your own). Depart Antioch Park 8 am and return around 4 pm. Van transportation and the services of a Park Ranger will be provided. **For more information call (913) 438-7275 ext 360.**

1-8 hr. trip - \$29

64-2109-011-01 11/18 Sat. 8 am

Birding Trip: Squaw Creek Eagle Days (Ages 18 & Older and children accompanied by Parent/Guardian)



Visit the yearly celebration of "Eagle Days" at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge. This is always a participant favorite, allowing everyone to view our national bird up-close. When we arrive at the refuge area, we will attend a special presentation which will include an up-close look at a mature Bald Eagle. We will tour the refuge and look through spotting scopes to view this amazing bird. It is not unusual to observe 150-200 Bald Eagles on the refuge and surrounding area including other wildlife such as ducks, geese, deer, etc. For lunch we will eat at Camp Rulo in Rulo, NE located along the banks of the Missouri River. We will leave Antioch Park at 6:45 am and return around 2 pm. Van transportation is provided. Participants must provide meal expenses and should bring binoculars for better viewing. **For more information call (913) 438-7275 x 1360.** Instructor: Park Ranger Stuart Foland. **1-7 hr. trip - \$29**

71-2109-011-01 12/2 Sat. 6:45 am

For more field trips around the Kansas City area check out Burroughs Audubon Society's **Field Trips** page at <http://www.burroughs.org>

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- Hiking • Family Activities
- And Much More!

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www.KCNature.org

Visit us on the Web at :

www.erniemiller.com

Or

www.jcprd.com



Mud Pies



Hands-on nature activities for pre-schoolers

By Sheila Fowks and Molly Postlewait

Naturalist Intelligence

By Molly Postlewait, Senior Park Naturalist

Socrates said "We learn when we recognize what we know." Children love to learn and explore nature and many children have a very strong naturalist intelligence. As adults we can help cultivate this curiosity.

Some kids love collecting rocks, fossils, shells and sticks. Others are experts on dinosaurs. Perhaps you have recognized some of the following tendencies in your child.

- * Sees patterns in the world around them
- * Likes to touch things
- * Keen sensory skills
- * Enjoys being outdoors
- * Notices changes in creatures and environment
- * Sense of protection toward animals and nature

Within the field of multiple intelligences, the category of naturalist intelligence has been recognized. For more information check out books by Howard Gardner and his writings on how kids are smart and how we can support and enhance the ability to learn.

From "Celebrating the Earth" by Norma J. Livio

Animal Tales Story Time
 (Ages 2-6 with adult)
Wednesdays, 10:30 am



Visit the Nature Center for stories, songs, and surprises geared to preschool children. Come listen and learn. Meet a special animal friend every time. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Note: The program on September 20 will celebrate Johnny Appleseed's birthday. **1-30 min. session - \$1.75 per person (including adults) Paid at site.**

9/6	Owls	10/18	Leaves
9/20	Johnny Appleseed	11/1	Teddy Bear
10/4	Prairie	11/15	Turkey



Nature Riddles

Here are few examples of nature riddles to play with your child:

Who am I ?

I leap and climb, I can hiss, I can purr. Answer: A kitty
 I fly and buzz, I am covered in fuzz, I might sting. Answer: A Bee
 I can hop, I can peep. I like to perch and peck. Answer: A Bird
 I can wiggle and glide, slither and slide. Answer: A Snake
 I croak, hop, and swim. I have bumps on my skin. Answer: A Toad

Encourage your child to imitate animal movements.
Have fun!



Little Cedar Reader: Children's Literature Corner

Enjoy the day for
 Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset
 Two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes
 No reward is offered for they are gone forever.
 Anonymous

Nature Craft

Fall is a wonderful time to study spiders. Spiders are great creatures to observe and marvel at. They are commonly seen and make some people uncomfortable. Discuss the characteristics of spiders (has 8 legs, spins a web, catches insects).

Then make a spider of your own

1. Separate one cup from an egg carton
2. Adult should punch 8 small holes into base of cup.
3. Insert pipe cleaners into holes as spiders legs.
4. Use marker or crayon to draw spider's face.

More spider activities:

Early morning observe dew on spider's web with the sun shining. Beads of water will shine and glow. At night shine a flashlight into bushes. The light from the flashlight will catch the sparkle of the spider's eye.

