



# Webster County Acreage Living

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## How to Care for Spring-Flowering Bulbs

Information provided by *Horticulture & Home Pest News*

Soon we will be enjoying the beauty of tulips, daffodils, and other spring-flowering bulbs. Proper caring for these plants during the remainder of spring and early summer will help to insure repeat performances in succeeding years.

Here are some tips:

- Remove the flower heads of tulips and daffodils as soon as the flower head fades. This will prevent the plant from expending large amount of energy in fruit (pod) development.
- After blooming, two to three pounds of a 5-10-5 fertilizer may be applied to 100 square feet of bed area. To prevent burning of the foliage, wash off any fertilizer which remains on the leaves.
- Control weeds that compete with the plants for food and water.
- The foliage of spring-flowering bulbs should not be removed until it has turned yellow and begun to die back. When it has done this, it can be safely cut off at ground level and discarded. Premature removal of plant foliage reduces plant vigor and bulb size, resulting in fewer flowers next spring.

## Sowing Beet Seeds

Information provided by *Richard Jauron, ISUE Horticulture*

Sow beet seeds at a depth of 1/2 to 1 inch any time after March in central Iowa. Additional plantings can be made every two to three weeks for a continuous harvest. The last practical planting date for a fall crop is August 1st.

Rows should be spaced 12 to 18 inches apart. When the seedlings reach a height of 3 to 4 inches, thin the planting. After thinning, plants should be spaced 3 to 4 inches apart.

Suggested varieties for Iowa include:

- Ruby Queen—a deep red, globe-shaped.
- Red Ace—a dark red, globe-shaped.
- Detroit Dark Red—a dark red, globe-shaped.
- Pacemaker III—a dark red, globe-shaped.
- Cylindra—a dark red, cylindrical.
- Burpee's Golden—yellow-orange, globe-shaped.
- Chioggia—flesh consists of red and white concentric rings.



## Morel Mushrooms

*Information provided by ISU Answerline, 1-800-262-3804*

Morel Mushrooms are the wild mushrooms that people pick in April and May. The season usually lasts 3-4 weeks. The size of the Morel depends upon spring rains and warm temperatures. The safe Morels are those that have the hollow stem. The tops of a Morel look like a sponge.

Once picked (not washed) you can store them in the refrigerator safely for 1-2 days – 3 days at the most.

Do not soak in water. They are best if you use a mushroom brush (brush them before cooking). If you feel you must put water on them, do a quick rinse.

## Preparing for the Possibility of Flooding

*Information provided by eXtension website [http://www.extension.org/pages/Extension\\_Disaster\\_Education\\_Network\\_Floods](http://www.extension.org/pages/Extension_Disaster_Education_Network_Floods)*

Many steps can be taken before an impending flood to reduce damage to home and property. Here are a few helpful tips:

1. **Know your flood risk.** Call your local emergency management office for information about flooding. Ask to see a flood map of your community.
2. **Check your sump pump.** Clean the sump pump and pit, and test the pump by pouring water into the pit. Make sure the discharge hose delivers the water several feet away from the house to a well-drained area that slopes away from the house.
3. **Move valuables to higher locations.** Irreplaceable items such as photo albums, personal videotapes, tax records, and insurance policies should be moved to a safe location.
4. **Prepare appliances for flooding.** You can try elevating or another option is moving to a high floor. Shut off appliances at the fuse box or breaker panel.
5. **Shut off electricity to areas of the home that might flood.** Even if floodwaters are not reaching the electrical outlets, the risk of electrical shock to someone working in a flooded basement is high. Don't stand in water while turning off

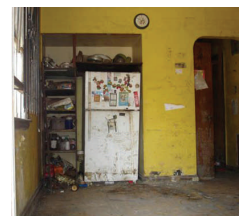
Early spring Morels don't have bugs. After late May, some mushrooms may need to be soaked because of insects.

When cooking Morels, most people cut in half or slice, rinse, dip them in beaten egg, then dip in flour or cracker crumbs, and fry them in a small amount of margarine or butter. They are usually crisp and brown in 3-4 minutes.

You may freeze Morels and even blanch them, however **WILD MUSHROOMS CAN NOT BE CANNED SAFELY.**

electrical switches.

6. **Move hazardous materials to higher locations.** This includes paint, oil, cleaning supplies, etc.
7. **Discuss safe emergency procedures.** Know where the fuse box and natural gas mains are and how to turn them off.
8. **Assemble supplies in case the electricity goes off.** Have bottled water and food that require no refrigeration or cooking. Have a battery-powered radio and flashlights with extra batteries.
9. **Plan for pets and livestock.** Plan ahead for a safe, higher location for your pet or livestock that you may have.
10. **Do not drive through flooded areas of roads.** Water depth can be deceiving along with the current on flooded roads. Portions of roads may be washed away.



*Flood damage inside a home.*

## *Planting Trees on an Acreage*

*Information provided by Paul Wray, ISU Extension Forester, 515-294-1168*

For years, the major rural home sites were associated with farms, but the trend to small acreages continues to grow and expand. These home sites will often benefit from the addition of woody vegetation.

Trees for acreages include ornamental and shade trees close to the home site, windbreaks and screens for both visual and environmental protection, plantings for wildlife habitat improvement, plantings to help conserve the soil and water resources, and other conservation plantings.

Woody plant landscaping is often the first item of concern for an acreage owner. Because of the desire to plant larger plant material, special selections or cultivars, most landowners use their local landscape nurseries for the plant material.

The major advantage of these types of plant materials is the establishment of larger stock, less transplant shock and greater control of the specific plant characteristics desired by the homeowner. Most of these plant materials also can be planted from spring through fall. Landscape plants should be watered during their first year of establishment.

For the other tree planting objectives, smaller plant material can often be used for establishment. Seedlings are the least expensive, and simply are plants grown in the nursery for a year or longer, dug from the nursery and supplied to the homeowner.

## *Outdoor Cleaning Tips*

*Information provided by Doug Stokke, Forest Products Extension Specialist*

As temperatures warm and the spring rains come, dirt and mildew on your house and outbuildings can become a real nuisance. Fortunately, cleaning is relatively easy, and a real must if your plans include painting. Paint simply doesn't stick very well to dirt, grease, mold, or mildew.

There are quite a number of commercial siding-cleaning products on the market, however for the cost-conscious, a simple home-brew solution will neatly do the trick for only pennies: mix 1/3 cup household detergent (liquid dishwashing soap will do fine), 1-2 quarts of 5% sodium hypochlorite (better known as liquid household bleach), and 2-3 quarts of

Transplant plant materials are seedlings that are re-planted at a nursery, grown for another period of time and again dug and marketed as bare-root plants. The major advantage of a transplant is a significantly larger root system. A third type of plant material commonly in the market, especially with some of the conifers, is the "plug+" plant types. Most of these consist of plant material that is first produced as small container plants from seed. These plants then are field planted for a period of time and then dug and marketed as bare-root plug plants.

Bare-root plant material is designed for spring planting. Spring planting provides the entire growing season for the plant to develop new roots and occupy its growing site. Planting too late in the spring or early summer does not allow sufficient time for root growth and expansion before hot and dry weather. Conifers are never good candidates for bare-root fall planting. For more information on planting bare-root plant material, visit the following sites: [www.iowadnr.com/forestry/catalog.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/forestry/catalog.html) or: [www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/plntseedl.html](http://www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/plntseedl.html).

Landscape plant materials are available from many sources in Iowa, as well as from mail order nurseries. Iowa sources of bare-root stock are somewhat limited, with a smaller number of nurseries providing the stock as well as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Nursery.

warm water. CAUTION: Never mix bleach with any cleaner or detergent that contains ammonia, as deadly toxic gasses will be generated.

Scrub the surface to be cleaned with a bristle brush or sponge, and then rinse with clean water. If you plan to paint let the surface dry thoroughly before you proceed.



*Cleaning the permanent siding.*

## Frequent Questions asked during the months of April & May

**Q. When are the Webster Co. 4-H Livestock ID Forms due?**

A. All animals to be shown at the Webster County Fair and State Fair must fill out a Livestock ID form and turn it into the Extension Office by May 15th. There is an ID form for Breeding Beef, Breeding Sheep, Swine, Dairy, Goat, Horse and Pony, Dog, and Cat. **Exception:** Market Beef are already on file at the office. Sheep ID's will be completed at the sheep weigh-in April 26. If you are planning on showing at the Iowa State Fair all information must be recorded. Livestock ID forms can be mailed or dropped off at the Extension Office anytime prior to May 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

**Q. How do I get my well tested?**

A. The Webster Co. Extension sells the test kit for \$14. However, the Webster Co. Sanitarian, Gary Boerner, does the same test. Every year he receives a grant to test wells in Webster County. His phone number 515-574-3801.

**Q. How many sandwiches do I need to make for graduation?**

A. Allow 20-25% shrinkage in any meat that is cooked before serving. Have meat sliced thinly – ½ ounce to 1 ounce per slice. Plan on 2-3 ounces of cooked meat per sandwich (3-4 slices). Depending on serving size, plan 4-6 servings per pound. Ham: Canned ham works better than a rolled and smoked ham. Beef: Best choice of beef cuts are: inside round; outside round; and sirloin tip. There may be as much as \$2.00/lb. difference in these cuts. Maid-rites: Allow 3-4 ounces cooked meat per sandwich. Egg Salad: For 100 sandwiches, 1/3 cup per sandwich: 100 eggs, 1 quart mayonnaise.

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**We're on the Web! <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/webster/info/acreage.htm>**

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