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# The Green Scene

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## Control of Ground Ivy in Lawns

Ground ivy or "creeping Charlie" (*Glechoma hederacea*) is a common weed in many lawns. Ground ivy is a low-growing, creeping, invasive perennial. It spreads by seeds and aboveground stems (stolons) which root at their nodes. The leaves of ground ivy are round or kidney-shaped with scalloped margins. Stems are four-sided. Flowers are small, bluish purple, and funnel-shaped. Ground ivy thrives in damp, shady areas, but also grows well in sunny locations. A member of the mint family, ground ivy produces a minty odor when cut or crushed.

Control of ground ivy in lawns is difficult. If the ground ivy is not completely destroyed, surviving portions will continue to grow and spread. Broadleaf herbicide products containing triclopyr provide the best control of ground ivy. A widely available product that contains triclopyr is 'Ortho Weed B Gon Chickweed, Clover and Oxalis Killer for Lawns.' Fall (late September through mid-November) is the best time to control ground ivy. (Spring applications are not as effective.) Two broadleaf herbicide applications are necessary to effectively control ground ivy. The first application should be made sometime from late Sep-

## Applying Broadleaf Herbicide to Lawn

**When is the best time to apply a broadleaf herbicide to the lawn?**
Fall (late September to early November) is the best time to apply broadleaf herbicides in Iowa. In fall, perennial broadleaf weeds are transporting food (carbohydrates) from their foliage to their roots in preparation for winter. Broadleaf herbicides applied in fall will be absorbed by the broadleaf weed's foliage and transported to the roots along with the carbohydrates, resulting in the destruction of the broadleaf weeds. Spring applications are generally less effective than fall applications. The most effective broadleaf herbicide products contain a mixture of two or three herbicides, as no single compound will control all broadleaf weeds. The most common broadleaf herbicides are 2,4-D, dicamba, triclopyr, mecoprop (MCPP) and quinclorac. A single application of a broadleaf herbicide effectively kills many broadleaf weeds. Difficult-to-control weeds, such as violets, will likely require two or more applications. To ensure adequate herbicide absorption, apply broadleaf herbicides when no rain is forecast for at least 24 hours. After treatment, allow four to five days to pass before mowing. This allows sufficient time for the broadleaf weeds to absorb the herbicide and translocate it to their roots.

**What is the proper way to apply broadleaf herbicides to the lawn?**
Broadleaf herbicides can be applied as liquids or granules. Before applying any herbicide, carefully read and follow label directions. Apply liquid broadleaf herbicides when the winds are light and temperatures are forecast to remain below 85 degrees Fahrenheit for 24 hours. Select a nozzle that produces coarse droplets and use low sprayer pressure. When spraying, keep the nozzle close to the ground. If only a few areas in the lawn have broadleaf weed problems, spot treat these areas rather than spraying the entire lawn. Apply just enough material to wet the leaf surfaces. Liquid herbicides are usually more effective than granular products. Granular broadleaf herbicides often are combined with fertilizers. Apply granular broadleaf herbicides and fertilizer/broadleaf herbicide combinations when the foliage is wet. Broadleaf herbicides are absorbed by the weed's foliage, not its roots. Moisture on the weed's foliage allows the granular herbicide to stick to the foliage for maximum absorption. Apply granular products in the early morning when the foliage is wet with dew or irrigate the lawn prior to application.

# Planting Spring Flowering Bulbs

**By Richard Jauron**

October is the best time to plant tulip and other spring-flowering bulbs. Make your selections and purchase bulbs, then follow the planting recommendations of ISU Extension and Outreach horticulturists to color your spring garden with floral beauty. To have additional questions answered, contact Hortline at hortline@iastate.edu or 515-294-3108.

**When is the best time to plant tulips?**
October is the ideal time to plant tulips, daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs in Iowa. When planted in October, spring-flowering bulbs have sufficient time to develop a good root system before the ground freezes in winter. If the weather permits, tulips and other spring-flowering bulbs can be planted as late as late November.

**What are good planting sites for tulips?**
Tulips perform best in full sun. Planting sites should receive at least six hours of direct sun each day. Tulips also need a well-drained, fertile soil.

**How deep should I plant tulips?**
Plant spring-flowering bulbs at a depth equal to three to four times their maximum bulb diameter. Accordingly, plant tulip bulbs 6 to 8 inches deep. Space bulbs 4 to 6 inches apart.
Plant tulips and other spring-flowering bulbs in clusters or groups to achieve the greatest visual impact in the garden. When planting tulips, plant 10 or more bulbs of the same cultivar in an area.

**Which tulips bloom over the longest number of years?**
Most modern tulip cultivars bloom well for only two or three years. However, there are some tulip types (classes) that bloom well over a longer time period.

Darwin hybrid tulips are generally the longest blooming hybrid tulip. Darwin hybrid tulips may bloom for five years or more when planted in favorable locations and given good care. Darwin hybrid tulips are prized for their large, brilliant flowers. Flowers are available in shades of red, pink, orange, yellow and white. Blooms are borne on stems that are up to 30 inches tall. Darwin hybrid tulips bloom in mid-spring.

Fosteriana tulips also perennialize well. They are noted for their large, elongated flowers. Flowers appear in early spring on 10- to 20-inch-tall stems. Foliage is typically green or gray-green. However, a few cultivars have mottled or striped foliage. Fosteriana tulips are also known as Emperor tulips.

Species tulips are generally the longest-lived tulips. Some naturalize when given favorable growing conditions. Species tulips include wild tulip species and cultivars developed from these wild species. Species tulips are usually smaller than modern tulips. They also have smaller flowers. Species tulips are excellent choices for rock gardens and in the front of beds and borders. They are also sometimes referred to as botanical tulips.

*"The Green Scene" is a tip sheet developed by the Marion County Extension Office to inform people of horticulture events, problems, and interesting ideas. Let us know if you want to be added to our mailing list. Some issues are also available at www.extension.iastate.edu/marion/. This material has been prepared by Lauren Petersen, Agriculture Program Assistant. If you have questions, please contact the office at (641) 842-2014.*
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