



BRR ALLIANCE INC.
Building Bridges to a Brilliant Future



Garden Patch



March Madness by Matthew Bucholz

It's that time of year again! Spring is on the way! I love early spring because I enjoy going to the store and grabbing the seeds and the new plants that have been shipped in. When heading to the store check out some of these early spring plants that will soon line the shelves:

Primrose—a favorite plant of mine; these hardy perennials add a nice touch of color in early spring. They are easy to grow and come in a wide variety of colors from red to purple. Grow these in clusters in your beds or as a border plant to add a punch of color.

Pansy—a cool season bloomer that also adds a nice flair of a color to your garden. Pansies also come in a variety of colors. Flowers tend to shrivel in summer (the flowers do not tolerate heat) but will usually bloom again in the fall. Pansies were often the subject of folklore and tradition. It was French tradition in the 1800s to give the wife a bouquet of pansies (and marigolds) to signify the thoughts and the cares of married life.

Spring is around the bend! Check out these plants for beautiful spring color!

Fast Fact: A paw-paw tree (*Asimina triloba*) has the largest edible fruits that are indigenous to the U.S. They are found locally in Erie County. The tree's fruit has a creamy interior which tastes similar to a banana.

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Pink primroses in the spring.
Photo by Karduelis

Events of Interest

3/24—Noon, Urban Roots,
 Gardening in the Shade Wksp;
 FREE, Pre-Registration Req'd.
 (716) 362-8982.

Forcing Bulbs for Indoor Color by Sharon Adler



Flowering hyacinth
Photo by Yusuf 1907

For more information
 please contact us at
info@BRRAlliance.org.

Forcing a bulb refers to manipulating growing conditions so that a plant will bloom earlier than usual, as early as January. The easiest and most widely available bulbs include: **paper-white narcissus, crocus, hyacinth and grape hyacinth, and daffodils.**

Paper-white narcissus are the easiest to grow, since they do not need a cool period to begin the process. You can start forcing paper-whites as soon as you buy bulbs in the fall and continue planting every two weeks until you can no longer find quality bulbs.

Select a shallow dish. Fill the dish with small pebbles or gravel and cover the rocks with water. Place the bulbs in the dish, pointed side up, nestling the bottoms into the wet stones. Place the dish in a warm, well-lit indoor location, such as a south window. Keep the stones constantly wet. Paper-whites usually bloom in about six weeks.

After blooming, if the soil is not frozen, plant the bulbs outdoors and keep them moist. Most bulbs can only be forced once. They may bloom next year, but most likely, they won't. Provide as much light as possible while the foliage is growing.

Hyacinths need to receive a cold treatment of 11 to 14 weeks. It is best to start in October for mid-winter blooms. Choose a shallow pot at least 3" deep with drainage holes at the base. Fill the pot loosely with potting mix. Set the bulbs near each other, but not touching, pointed sides up. Set bulbs so that their tips are even with the pot's rim; don't press the bulbs into the mix. Cover with additional potting mix, leaving the tips exposed. Water thoroughly and discard drainage.

Move the pot to a dark, cool (40 degree), but not freezing location in the basement, unheated garage or refrigerator. Keep the medium barely moist for the period of time required. When shoots reach about 2" tall, place the pot in a slightly warmer location (50 degrees) location with low light intensity and increase watering. Over the next few days, gradually move it toward a sunny window. Turn the pot every day for even growth. When it is in full bloom, keep the hyacinth in a bright location with direct sunlight to prolong the bloom.

You can also grow a hyacinth bulb in a jar or vase, see above paper-white instructions, but remember that it will still need the cool period