



A word about Minnehaha Master Gardeners: We are volunteers trained through the South Dakota State University Extension [Master Gardener Program](#). The mission of MMG is to enhance and supplement community educational efforts of the SDSU Extension Master Gardener Program and to provide research-based education and information on horticulture and environmental stewardship. For more information on becoming a Master Gardener, visit [SDSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer program](#)

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## What's inside

Seed Saving Tomato Seeds .....	2
Growing Artichokes in the North - Update .....	3
Overwintering Dahla Tubers .....	4 - 6
Final Considerations for a Boulevard Transformation.....	7 - 9
Tivoli Gardens Flower Festival .....	10

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# Seed Saving Tomato Seeds

Carla Goetsch, Master Gardener



As we wind down gardening season 2025, it's also time to start thinking about next year. If you have a particular variety of tomatoes you want to make sure you can grow again next year, you can save seeds. You do have to determine if the seed is a hybrid or an heirloom.

- A hybrid is a seed that will result in one of the types of plants used to create the hybrid. Think about how parents may have half their children be blue-eyed blonds and the other half are brown-eyed brunettes. The same is true with hybrid seeds -- you may never know what you are going to get. So, it's best to avoid saving seeds from hybrid plants. Examples of hybrid tomatoes are: Big Boy, Better Boy, Celebrity, Sun Gold, Supersweet 100, or Goliath.
- Heirloom seeds have been true to type, so they produce the exact same plant every time, year after year. Therefore, if you want a certain trait, use heirloom seeds. Examples of heirloom tomatoes would be Purple, Black Krim, Brandywine, and Yellow Pear.

Start by labeling your tomatoes when you plant them to make sure you know what type of tomato you are using for seed saving. A very simple way to save seed would be to remove the seeds from a couple of the nicest, largest tomatoes on a paper towel.

Let the seeds dry completely on the paper towel. Then store in a cool, dark, dry place, such as a closet or refrigerator, in an envelope labeled accordingly. Tomato seeds germinate best the next year, but successful germination can happen for five years.

Another way to put the seeds with pulp in a jar covered with a paper towel, and ferment them for 2 to 4 days. Then, after this time, fill the jar with water, and the seeds will sink, and the pulp will float and may be discarded. Dry the seeds on a paper plate for several days. Make sure seeds are well labeled and stored in a cool, dry location.

# Growing Artichokes in the North -- An Update --

Debi Ulrey-Crosby, Master Gardener

As you might recall, I recently wrote an article on growing artichokes in the north; specifically, for me, here in South Dakota. Please refer to the July 2025 newsletter for more detail.

I planted two different varieties: Green Globe from Botanical Interests and Imperial Star from Johnny's Seeds. Plants were planted out into my garden late May, and I continued to water and fertilize them throughout the summer.

The Imperial Star variety didn't grow well and eventually the leaves just shriveled and died. They didn't seem to have any health issues but maybe just didn't like the soil or climate. The Green Globe variety did better.

The ten Green Globe plants grew well, but I eventually lost one plant. The plants never really got as big as predicted – only 2-ft tall and wide. Of the nine surviving plants, only one plant grew blossoms. It actually produced two, one of which bloomed and opened before I could have possibly picked it to eat.

After all, this was my prime reason for growing them -- to eat it! This same plant also produced a smaller bud that is still not opening. Needless to say, my plans for a wonderful artichoke meal never happened.

So now, the big question is this: will I grow them again next year?

They were a little harder to grow with their requirement of some vernalization when a small plant, they do take up a fair amount of space, and they do have thistle type leaves (think prickly).

But the blossom and plant do have some architectural interest, and of course, there's still the chance that I just might get a few more blossoms, and maybe, just maybe they'll be edible!

So, YES, I am planning on growing them again next year. In the end, growing a garden is always an experiment, right?



# Overwintering Dahlia Tubers

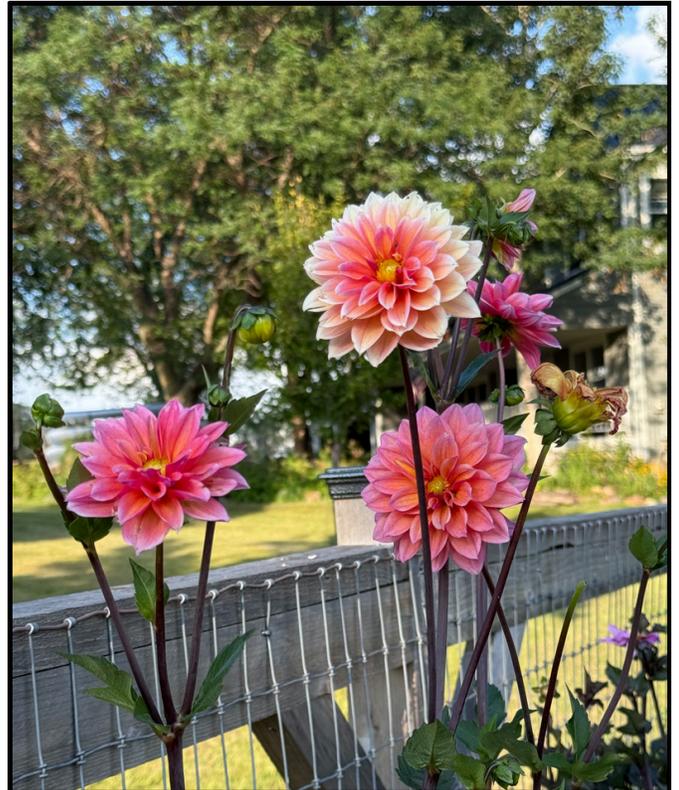
Debi Ulrey-Crosby, Master Gardener

Growing dahlias in a cold climate can be a rewarding experience. You've spent the summer growing and caring for your beautiful dahlias, but now that winter is approaching, you might be wondering how you can save those precious tubers for next year. With just a little planning and only a few requirements, you can save your tubers for many years to come.

Once a hard frost happens, wait about two weeks before cutting off the dead material or digging into the soil. This gives the tubers' skin a chance to toughen. Once the tubers have had a chance to toughen, cut off all dead material, leaving the stem about 4". This gives you an easy handle to help lift them from the soil. If there's a chance that a hard freeze is imminent, you will need to dig all your tubers up as soon as possible. A frozen tuber is a dead tuber!

Dig tubers from the soil, being careful to avoid piercing or cutting into a tuber. They can grow quite large, so start digging at least 12" away from the main stem. I often use a potato fork rather than a shovel, but a shovel works, too. Check for and remove any damaged or diseased areas.

You can either rinse the soil off with water or brush it off with your hands or a soft brush. I prefer to brush off as much soil as I can. Let tubers dry for a few days or so until they feel dry to the touch. Once they



are dry to the touch, you can trim the stem closer to the tubers where the stem is no longer hollow.

If you want to divide your tubers, you can do this now or in the spring. Each tuber needs an eye, the growth point, for future flower production, so avoid cutting them off. Dividing the roots in the fall is easier but the eyes are harder to see. Dividing in the spring is harder (the tubers are stiffer) but the eyes are easier to see. Now they are ready for winter storage. Dividing in the spring also means that you only need to label a clump of tubers for storage, rather than needing to label each separate tuber.

There are various ways to store the tubers. They can be wrapped individually in plastic wrap, then placed into a box, with a single layer, as recommended by the American Dahlia Society.

They can also be wrapped in newspaper and placed upside down into paper bags then into closed boxes, or placed in containers filled with either sand, vermiculite or wood (pet) shavings. I use a plastic container with enough vermiculite to cover the bottom about 1 inch, then place tubers upside down so they don't touch each other and cover well. If you want to make a double layer you can do that as long as there's enough dry material between layers.

Be sure to label your tubers in the container and also label the outside of the container. Place a lid loosely on them and store in a dark, dry location about 40-50°F.

Check the tubers once a month for any signs of disease or shriveling, a sign that the moisture level is too low. Simply spraying very lightly with water can help maintain the needed moisture level. Be sure that this area does not freeze even for a short time. Again, remember a frozen tuber is a dead tuber!

Sometime around late February or March, you might notice that your tubers are beginning to show signs of growth. The eyes will begin to swell and may even grow an inch or two. This means it's getting time to plant them up in pots and keep them indoors until outside temperatures allow planting outside.

Congratulations! You have successfully overwintered your dahlias.



## References:

WhiteFlowerFarm.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tZWg7PFDxA&t=211s>

Garden Answer

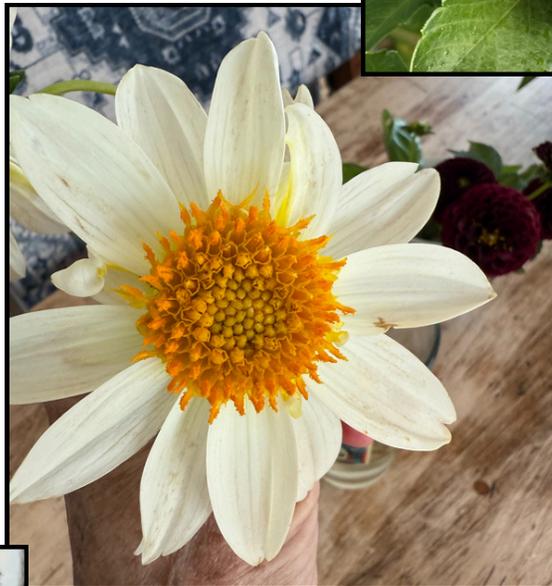
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXVe9e-7yfk>

Regenerative Gardening with Blossom and Branch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcdvspCfO78>

Southeastern Michigan Dahlia Society

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJFeZiZnCMg>



# Final Considerations for a Boulevard Transformation

Pam Conklin, Master Gardener

You've been thinking about it. You looked up some native plants listed in September's newsletter. You've checked out [SDSU's Native Plant Initiative research](#) to reinforce your commitment. There are still a few housekeeping details to consider, so you will be ready to break ground for your new pollinator garden. Continue reading for next steps.

## Preparing the ground

Preparing the boulevard before planting is one of the most important steps. You'll want to remove existing turf and weed seed banks to give your native plants the best chance. Here are the main methods used in boulevards with compacted, sunny soil.

## Soil solarization (non-chemical, summer method). Photo to right

Best for: Killing grass and weed seeds with heat.

Steps:

1. Mow grass/weeds very short.
2. Water the soil deeply.
3. Cover with clear plastic sheeting (2–4 mil) and seal the edges with soil or bricks.
4. Leave in place 6–8 weeks during peak summer sun (June–August).

Result: Soil heats to 120–140°F, killing grass, weeds, and many seeds/pathogens.

Notes: Works best in full sun; shady boulevards may need another method.

## Herbicide application (chemical method)

Best for: Quick removal when you want to plant in the same season.

Steps:

1. Use a systemic herbicide like glyphosate (kills roots as well as tops).
2. Apply when grass/weeds are actively growing (70°F+, not drought-stressed).
3. Wait 7–14 days, then reapply if regrowth occurs.
4. Till or lightly rake dead grass before planting.

Notes: Fastest, but may conflict with pollinator-friendly values—some avoid this route.



Secured clear plastic allows heat in, but keeps moisture & air out

## Sod removal (manual/mechanical method)

Best for: Small boulevard strips, or if you want immediate bare soil.

Steps:

1. Cut sod using a flat spade or rent a sod cutter.
2. Remove roots and thatch down to bare soil.
3. Dispose of sod or compost it (if weeds aren't invasive).

Pros: No chemicals; instant bare soil.

Cons: Labor-intensive; may bring up weed seeds buried deeper.

## Sheet mulching (lasagna method)

Best for: Slower but low-maintenance prep.

Steps:

- Mow grass short.
- Lay down cardboard or 5–6 sheets of newspaper (overlapping edges).
- Cover with 3–6 inches of compost, soil, or mulch.
- Leave in place for at least one growing season before planting.

Notes: Smothers grass/weeds, improves soil, but can look “unfinished” in public boulevards unless topped with mulch.



## Which method is best for you?

- Quick turnaround (same season): Herbicide or sod removal.
- Eco-friendly & patient: Solarization (summer - ready to plant/seed in fall) or sheet mulching (1 year).

Best combo approach:

- Use sod removal for immediate bare soil.
- Follow with solarization or a flush of weeds + shallow cultivation to reduce weed seed bank.

Once the boulevard is cleared, you'll want to amend compacted soil: loosen with a garden fork, add a bit of compost (I also add gypsum, because it binds with clay to loosen soil, neutralizes dog urine, and salts from winter road treatments), then seed or plant your chosen pollinator species.

Many nurseries, as well as SDSU Native Plant Initiative and online sellers, offer native pollinators for fall planting and seeding, so don't feel pressured to purchase plants in spring that must be held over until fall.

### Finishing touches and reminders:

- Don't over-crowd -- plant and seed with mature size in mind.
- Mark seeded areas -- this will help prevent mistaking sprouting plants as weeds to pull in spring, and also keep you from planting or seeding other species in the same space.
- Add mulch -- cover exposed soil with mulch to stave off soil erosion.
- Avoid fall cleanup -- leave seed-heads and native grasses over winter. Many birds and insects, including specific pollinators, require the food and shelter that these plants provide.
- Plant fillers in the spring -- annuals work well to add season-long color and fill-in spaces while perennials slowly mature.



### Wondering what native annuals to plant?

Consider wildflowers that naturally occur in SD (best choices to support specialist native bees and other insects occurring naturally in this region):

- Plains Coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*) – nectar/pollen for native bees, butterflies.
- Partridge Pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*) – loved by bumble bees, leafcutter bees, sulphur butterflies.
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) – a short-lived perennial, but often reseeds; attracts native bees and butterflies.
- Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*) – draws bees and butterflies.
- Purple Prairie Clover (*Dalea purpurea*) – excellent for native bees.
- Clasping Coneflower (*Dracopis amplexicaulis*) – bright yellow, pollinator favorite.

### Non-native annuals that are excellent nectar sources:

- Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*) – long bloom season, loved by bees and butterflies.
- Zinnias (*Zinnia elegans*) – excellent nectar for butterflies, especially monarchs and painted ladies.
- Bachelor's Button (*Centaurea cyanus*) – bees, butterflies, beetles visit heavily.
- Pot marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) – provides nectar and pollen for bees. Attracts hoverflies that help control aphids.

You should now have enough information and inspiration to join the growing number of Minnehaha area South Dakotans taking steps to help our pollinators survive while adding life and beauty to the boulevard.

Best of luck on this fulfilling journey!

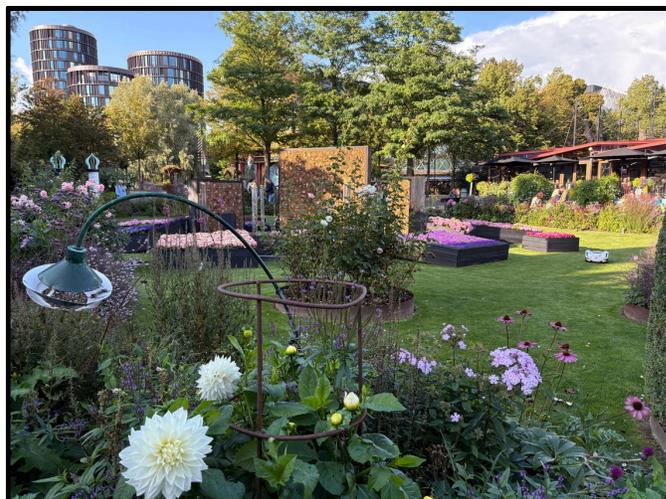
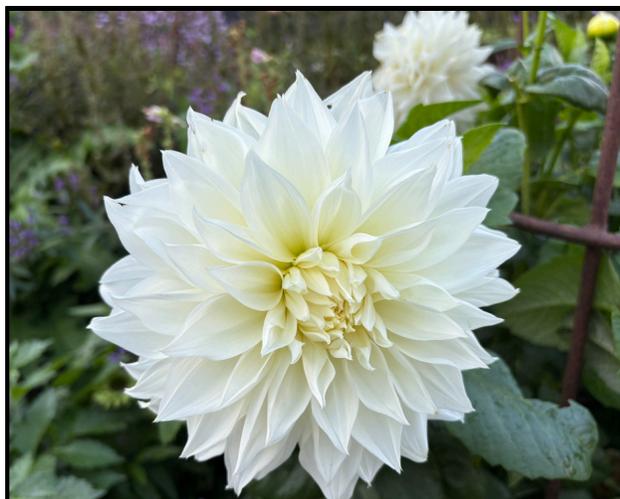
# Tivoli Gardens Flower Festival

Candy Van Dam, Master Gardener

Sometimes timing is everything. I was fortunate to be visiting Copenhagen, Denmark, during the Tivoli Gardens Flower Festival, August 30 to September 14.

The theme for this year's Festival was "Tribute to Tivoli," with displays, installations, and events focusing on interpretations of the garden's beauty and heritage. The festival features immaculate arrangements, with over 100,000 flowers and plants carefully arranged throughout the park. There were flowerbeds, hanging baskets, and floral sculptures.

The festival is not just a showcase of flowers, but also an opportunity for visitors to get inspiration for their own gardens. Visitors can purchase plants, flowers, and gardening tools at the festival's market stalls. Many of these feature rare flowers, seeds, and gardening accessories that aren't found elsewhere.



Photos by Candy Van Dam