



Gardeners may notice a bulb shortage

Remember the great toilet paper shortage of 2020? Gardeners who plan to plant bulbs this fall may notice a bulb shortage. Demand for not only bulbs, but plants and other gardening supplies has skyrocketed since the start of the pandemic and isn't showing any signs of slowing down.

With more and more people planting bulbs, there's more competition in the marketplace. Many bulbs come from Holland, and growers there are dealing with weather problems.

A cold spring caused bulbs to bloom late. A stretch of warm weather when the bulbs needed mild temperatures to grow to a suitable size resulted in a shorter growing period. Most bulbs didn't grow to the large sizes needed because of the less-than-ideal growing conditions. Plants with less foliage produce smaller bulbs, and that means fewer of this year's bulbs made it to market.

In addition to the heat, Holland also experienced a wetter-than-normal summer. Heavy rains caused issues during the typical harvest time. Another factor is the higher demand for flowers indoors during the pandemic. This means many of the available tulip bulbs were used for cut flower production.

Gardeners who do find bulbs may discover specific varieties are in short supply or possibly not even available.

Another issue is shipping. Most bulbs are shipped by boat. A worldwide container shortage, coupled with related scheduling issues are making it more difficult for suppliers to get their expected inventory. Once boats do make it to the dock, there's a shortage of truck drivers to get bulbs to the stores.

Another cause of the bulb shortage is many manufacturers were required to shut down or cut back on shifts during the pandemic, which results in limited supplies. Don't delay purchasing your bulbs this year.

It's no secret that Mother Nature can throw a wrench in even the best-laid plans. Therefore, this could be a great time to try something new in the garden.

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