

What to do *in your garden* this season



BIG ON BIENNIALS

Many herbs (such as parsley, though it's often treated as an annual) and annual flowers (such as hollyhocks) are biennials, and are also self-seeding. Biennials are two-year plants—the plant grows one year; flowers (producing seeds) the next, then dies. The best time to plant biennial seeds is late summer to early fall. Be sure not to hoe out the “weeds” too early next spring.

SPROUTING COCONUTS

A coconut is really a very large seed, and it can be sprouted just like other seeds. A sprouting coconut looks like a young coconut palm, with green fronds emerging from the coconut seed. Try sprouting one at home. Check Asian markets for the freshest coconut possible—it should feel heavy for its size and have a bright green husk intact. Shake it gently and listen for the sound of coconut water inside the shell; this nutrient-rich liquid helps the seed germinate. Coconuts with dark brown husks probably won't germinate. Place the coconut in a deep, wide pot filled with sandy loam, with its lower third below the soil surface and pointy ends placed horizontally. If kept warm and in sun, the coconut should sprout within 4 months.

BULB PLANTER REPURPOSED

If you have a bulb planter—a hollow, tube-like device that pulls out a plug of dirt, leaving a deep hole in which to plant the bulb—use it to create a hole for your 6-pack plants. It's just the right size.

SUCCESSION PLANTING

Your garden doesn't have to be over after your first harvest. Try succession planting. Pop in broccoli transplants in March to harvest in June. Then plant summer squash in the same space, and pull them out once the harvest declines in October. About one week after that, plant garlic.

