

# Let's Garden!

## What TO DO in Your Garden this FALL

Autumn is a lovely time in the garden. Colors change and the gardening pace slows down. It's a good season to be thinking ahead and planning the garden for next year. Start a garden journal—take photographs of plantings that did well in your garden this summer and take note of changes to make for next year. It is time to start tidying up and preparing the garden for winter and the ground for a healthy and productive garden season next year. **The average first frost usually arrives in mid to late October.**

### Trees & Shrubs

- Fall is a great time to plant trees and shrubs! Apply *Root Stimulator* to reduce transplant shock.
- Do corrective pruning (crossed branches, etc.), remove all dead and diseased wood and prune plants to desired shape. Do NOT prune spring flowering trees & shrubs such as redbuds, big-leaf hydrangeas, lilacs, forsythia, rhododendrons and azaleas as they have already set their buds.
- Mulch up to 2" around the drip line of trees and shrubs. *No donut mulching!* Mulch should not touch the bark of the tree or shrub.
- Trim hedges as necessary.
- Root prune Wisteria and fertilize with *Espoma Quick Solutions Super Phosphate*.
- Apply *Wilt Pruf* on azaleas, rhododendrons, hollies and other broadleaf evergreens in late October.
- Apply *Espoma Garden Iron* to evergreens showing signs of iron chlorosis (yellowing foliage).
- Apply *Espoma Garden Sulphur* to blue-blooming hydrangeas, and *Magnesium Sulphate* to white-blooming hydrangeas.
- Continue watering evergreens until the ground freezes. Soil must not be dry when winter arrives.
- Spray euonymous with *Scalecide* or organic *Saf-T-Side* to treat for scale.
- Apply *Bayer Advanced 12-Month Tree & Shrub Insect Control*—a systemic insecticide to protect against Japanese Beetle and other insect damage.
- Apply *Holly-tone* to organically feed acid loving plants.

### Lawn

- Mow the lawn to a length of 3".
- Rake lawn to remove thatch and spike or aerate to alleviate compaction.
- Fall is the best time in St. Louis to overseed lawns because the soil temperatures are still warm so seed germinates quickly. Keep leaves off newly seeded lawns.
- If reseeding apply either *Pro Start Organic* or *Espoma Organic Lawn Food*. Use *PennMulch* instead of straw in newly seeded areas to hold seed in place and help retain moisture. (Straw contains weed seed.)
- Apply *Bayer Advanced 24-Hour Grub Control* to kill white grubs of Japanese Beetle, Mole Crickets and Crane Fly Larvae, or apply *Milky Spore*, an all natural grub control, to lawn and beds to help control Japanese Beetles next year.
- Feed established lawns with *Espoma Organic Lawn Food* in late October/November.
- If you **are not** reseeding, use *Weed Out* or *Espoma Organic Weed Preventer Plus Lawn Food* to prevent early weeds such as henbit, chickweed and spring crabgrass..
- Test soil and apply *Nutra Lime* if necessary.
- Apply *Espoma Garden Gypsum* to compacted lawns to loosen heavy clay.

## Flowers

- Transplant and/or divide perennials that were crowded or had 'die-out' in the center. Apply *Pro-Start* and *Cotton Bur Compost* to new divisions and plantings.
- Use *Liquid Fence* or *Deer & Rabbit Solution* to keep rabbits and deer away.
- Pot Toppers* will deter squirrels from digging up newly planted flowers.
- Remove dead flower heads by cutting them at the base of the stem to encourage reblooming and to prevent the plant from using large quantities of energy to produce seed.
- Remove all weeds in beds and borders before they set seed by digging them out by the root or by spot spraying them with a non-selective weed killer such as *Weed Impede* or *Roundup*. Use *Weed and Grass Stopper* to prevent new weeds from sprouting.
- Especially important for heavy soils, incorporate well-rotted organic matter such as *Cotton Bur Compost* and *Soil Perfector* into the soil.
- Clean up all diseased and decaying foliage to prevent spread of diseases.
- Summer annuals may be declining. Replace them with cool-season flowers such as pansies, chrysanthemums, dusty miller, alyssum and ornamental kales and cabbages. Add *Espoma Dried Blood* to new plantings to improve flowers and foliage.
- Plant biennials such as digitalis (foxglove), mullein, campanula, dianthus, poppies, and snapdragons for bloom next year.
- Bring indoors tender perennials (fuchsia, coleus), herbs (bay laurel, rosemary) and tropicals (mandevilla, hibiscus, jasmine) and keep them in a cool, frost-free location in good light. Hose-off plants being careful to also get the underside of leaves, then spray with *Safe-T-Side* prior to bringing inside. Most plants benefit from a good pruning (no more than 1/3 of the plant should be removed) and shaping before they come in for the winter. Weak winter growth should be pruned again in February. Do not feed tropicals from October until February. Check frequently for insects--aphids, scale, white fly and mealy bugs can be a problem in dry winter air. Plants will benefit from a periodic watering in the sink or shower.
- Terra cotta pots and non frost-proof containers should be emptied, cleaned and stored after the first hard freeze. Frost-resistant containers (concrete, fiberglass or resin) may be replanted with cool-season flowers (pansies, kale, etc.), evergreens such as boxwood or dwarf spruce trees, and topiaries for fall through spring color. Place the containers on pot feet so the container does not freeze to the ground.
- Fall is the only time to transplant and divide herbaceous plants with large tap roots such as baptisia and peonies. Replant using *Pro-Start*, *Bone Meal* and *Cotton Burr Compost*.
- Early spring-flowering perennials such as hellebores, pulmonaria, bergenia, and primrose should be planted and 1-2" of mulch applied around the base of the plant.
- After beds are weeded and cleaned of debris, apply mulch or leaf mold to perennial beds and borders. Mulch after temperatures drop below 25 degrees with *Shredded Hardwood Mulch* or *Cotton Bur Compost*—perennials need to be chilled to bloom next year. Make sure not to bury the crown (center) of the plant with mulch.

## Vegetables & Herbs

- Remove and compost finished crops.
- Plant *Organic Seeds of Change* cool season vegetables such as peas, lettuce, kale, beets, onions, kohlrabi, radish, spinach, carrots, & turnips. Cool season herbs include cilantro & parsley.
- Plant cool season vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower.
- Lift and store root vegetables—lift and place in the sun for a few hours to harden the skin before being stored in a cool, frost-free location.

- ❑ Harvest and dry or freeze herbs for winter use. Herbs such as parsley, rosemary, chives, thyme and marjoram can be dug from the garden and placed in pots for growing indoors in winter.
- ❑ Pinch off any young tomatoes that are too small to ripen. This will channel energy into ripening the remaining full-size fruits.
- ❑ Keep broccoli picked regularly to encourage additional production of side shoots.
- ❑ Remove all weeds to prevent seed germination.
- ❑ Dig in composted manure, leaf mold or organic material such as *Cotton Bur Compost* or *Worm Castings* to replenish and improve soil.
- ❑ Use *Harvest Guard Row Covers* to extend the growing season.

## Bulbs

- ❑ In September, start bulbs for indoor forcing such as tulips and daffodils. In early November, start amaryllis and Paperwhites for winter color or holiday gifts.
- ❑ Lift and store tender bulbs such as gladiolas, dahlias, caladiums, elephant ears and agapanthus before the first hard frost.
- ❑ Plant spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips and daffodils when the temperature drops and stays below 50 degrees. Use *Espoma Bulb-tone* when planting spring bulbs for strong roots and large flowers.
- ❑ Plant spring bulbs among hostas, ferns, daylilies, or ground covers. As these plants grow in the spring, they will hide the dying bulb foliage.
- ❑ Rabbits will not eat hyacinths, daffodils or scillas or alliums!
- ❑ Use *Espoma Bulb-tone* on established bulb planting to nurture them for better flowers in spring.

## Roses

- ❑ Stop pruning and feeding roses to allow the bush to harden off for winter.
- ❑ Clean up all diseased foliage and treat with fungicide such as *Organic Rose Pharm*.
- ❑ After first heavy freeze (below 25 degrees), prune 50% of top growth of all roses but climbers, and mulch heavily to cover crown using *Shredded Hardwood Mulch* or *Cotton Bur Compost*.

## Ponds

- ❑ Thin out oxygenator plants. Remove old growth and put only new growth tips back in the pond.
- ❑ Feed fish until the water temperature falls below 50 degrees.
- ❑ Be sure all hardy water perennials are on the bottom of the pond, at least 18" deep. Bring tender plants in to a frost-free location and keep them wet all winter.
- ❑ Clean all debris out of pond to prevent algae and bacteria from developing.
- ❑ If leaving the pump in the pond, clean well and move to a higher location so that the warmer water at the bottom remains undisturbed for the health of the plants and fish.
- ❑ If removing filter, clean and store properly following the manufacturer's recommendation.
- ❑ If putting heat ring or floating de-icer in for the winter, do so in late October.
- ❑ For easy spring clean-up, cover pond with screen or netting (available at Garden Heights) to prevent leaves and debris from entering the water.

## House Plants

- ❑ Cactus and succulents die from over watering more than any other reason. Reduce the amount and frequency of watering to reduce the danger of root rot.
- ❑ As the amount of natural light dwindles, remember to turn your pots regularly to ensure that every side of the

plant is receiving sunlight.

- ❑ To ensure sufficient humidity, place moisture-loving plants such as creeping figs, ferns, orchids, and aralias on attractive trays filled with gravel, polished stones or beach pebbles. Daily misting can also help increase humidity levels.
- ❑ Repot tropicals and spray with *Safe-T-Side* to kill insects before bringing indoors.

### Compost

- ❑ Shred and compost any non-diseased herbaceous and woody plant material and leaves. Turn the compost pile weekly, and help “heat” it up to speed up the decaying process by adding *Espoma Natural Organic Bio-Excellerator* or *Pro-Start*.
- ❑ Add water to compost pile to keep moist.

### For The Birds

- ❑ Shelter, food, and nesting areas are necessary to attract and encourage birds to your fall garden. Birdhouses provide shelter. Feeders and berry-producing shrubs such as winterberry (deciduous holly), provide food and nesting areas.
- ❑ Select seed to attract your favorite birds. Chickadees, nut hatches, and finches are attracted to sunflower seeds, thistle, and suet. Cardinals, mocking birds and woodpeckers are attracted to sunflower seed and peanut suet.
- ❑ Make sure to keep your hummingbird feeders full now. They will need the fuel in preparation for their long migration to Mexico and Central America starting in mid-September. You will also see more hummingbirds now, as the young born in the spring will also be at the feeders.

### Fall Decorating

- ❑ Colorful fall wreaths will brighten you door.
- ❑ Vance Kittira scent-free long burning candles are great for entertaining or make a welcome hostess gift.
- ❑ Bundled wheat, barley and twigs as well as berry swags, sprays, and berry balls will decorate your mantle or table.
- ❑ Pumpkins, gourds, bales of straw and cornstalks will be available in October.
- ❑ Use lanterns and solar lights to create ambiance for outdoor entertaining.

### **Try This Flower For Fall And Spring Color!**

Plant *Winter Survivor*<sup>TM</sup> Pansies and Violas in September for instant color in your garden. They will bloom until the snow flies and are guaranteed to survive the winter. *Winter Survivor*<sup>TM</sup> pansies will reappear in early spring and bloom continuously until it's time to plant your summer annuals. These friendly flowers come in all your favorite colors adding irresistible charm to your garden for months. Just plant 6-8" apart in partial to full sun (4-12 hours/day). Underplant with tulip & narcissus bulbs for a glorious display of color next spring! *This kind of reward is gardening at its best!*

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