

November Garden Activities from Your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Trees and Shrubs - Fall is an excellent time to plant trees, shrubs, and perennials. Be sure to remove any wire that may be wrapped around the trunk and roots when you plant a tree.

Do not prune trees and shrubs now because the pruning will stimulate new growth that may be killed by freezes. Wait until January or February when they are dormant.

Add a fresh layer of mulch to trees and shrubs to help insulate the roots as temperatures drop. There are two choices: shredded leaves and pine straw.

Deciduous trees and shrubs can help with energy efficiency in your home. They provide shade in the summer and let sunshine in during the winter.

To help prevent damage to evergreen shrubs and small trees from low temperatures, make sure they receive adequate moisture as we enter the winter season.

Scale insects on trees and shrubs can be controlled with dormant oils.

Fruit Trees - Set out fruiting plants from October to March.

Vegetables - Make a list of vegetable and plant varieties that performed well in your garden this season so you will be ready to order seeds for your spring plantings.

Consider planting unused areas of your vegetable garden with a cover crop like clover or put a layer of leaves on your garden. Plow it under about three weeks before spring planting and this will improve your soil by adding nutrients and organic matter.

To prepare your garden soil for planting next spring, turn your soil 8 to 12 inches deep with a spade or shovel to provide aeration and add composted organic matter.

Clean your tomato cages before storing them to prevent insects and diseases when you plant next spring.

Flowerbeds - Clean up your perennial borders by removing dry stems and dead leaves to help prevent a build-up of insects and diseases and add composted organic matter.

Dig up bulbs that need to be stored for the winter like caladiums, elephant's ears and dahlias.

Plant spring flowering bulbs now, and through the end of November.

There is still time to plant pansies. Fertilize them every two weeks with water-soluble plant food and to encourage more bloom, remove faded flowers regularly. Switch to a fertilizer containing "nitrate nitrogen" and follow label directions as the weather gets colder.

Plant Lenten rose (*Helleborus orientalis*) now, and it may bloom for you next February.

After your chrysanthemums and asters have quit blooming, cut them back to about five inches.

Remove any remaining foliage left on peonies.

Pot up your Mandevilla vine and bring it indoors for the winter. Cut it back to 2 feet high and place it in bright light until spring.

Keep pansies and other seasonal flowers watered regularly.

Lawns - To keep your lawn healthy, rake fallen leaves regularly from your lawn. Use fallen leaves in your compost pile or shred them and use them for mulch.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested if you have not already done so. Stop by your local Extension office for a soil test bag and instructions. If you need to add lime, add it now so it will have time to work into the soil. Wait until next spring to apply any fertilizer that is needed so the nutrients will not leach from the soil before spring planting.

Houseplants - Do not be alarmed if your houseplants drop a few leaves when you bring them indoors after they have enjoyed the summer on your patio. This is normal as they adjust to less light and drier air inside your home.

Force bulbs to bloom indoors; a good choice is paperwhites.

Cut back on fertilizing your indoor plants and do not water them unless the soil feels dry.

Do not place your houseplants too close to a window because the draft can turn the leaves brown.

Miscellaneous - Collect okra seedpods, rose hips, gourds, and other material from your garden for dried flower arrangements and craft projects.

Inventory and clean up your garden tools. If you need a tool, you may drop a hint to friends and family since the Christmas season is coming soon!

Add a rain barrel to your gutter down spout to conserve rainwater for your garden.

If you do not have a compost pile, it's not too late to start one.

Keep your bird feeders filled with black oil sunflower seeds.

Leave hardy water lilies and fish in ponds deep enough not to freeze solid.
Compost tropical water lilies.

Jo Anne Allen
Master Gardener Extension Volunteer