

## **September Garden Activities from Your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers**

**Trees and Shrubs** - Gardening lore says plant trees, shrubs, and perennials in months which have the letter "r" in their names – September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April.

Fertilize roses one last time for the season so they will have time to slow down their growth before cold weather arrives.

Azaleas and rhododendrons are forming flower buds now for next year so keep these plants watered to insure good bud formation and flowers next spring.

Mulch trees and shrubs to protect your plants from temperature extremes and to keep the soil evenly moist. Keep mulch back 3 inches from the trunk to prevent damage and disease.

Do not prune or fertilize trees and shrubs now. Pruning and fertilizing will stimulate new growth that could be hurt as temperatures drop.

Replace mulch under trees and shrubs to prevent diseases on next year's foliage.

**Vegetables** - Plant a fall garden: sow seeds/transplant seedlings of mustard, spinach, turnips, beets, carrots, kale, radishes, broccoli, lettuce, onions, collards, and cabbage.

Plant garlic now for harvest next summer.

Cover crops like annual rye, buckwheat and crimson clover planted in unused areas of your garden help hold the soil in place and add organic matter when tilled into the soil next spring before planting.

Clean up your vegetable garden space to decrease your pest problems next season.

Dig sweet potatoes before frost.

To keep weed seeds from blowing into your cultivated garden area, keep turf surrounding your garden mowed, directing grass clippings away from your garden area.

Do not apply pesticides when temperatures exceed 85 degrees or when it is windy.

**Flowerbeds** - Autumn is a good time to add perennials, trees and shrubs to your garden. Plant fall blooming perennials such as aster, chrysanthemum, goldenrod and black-eyed Susan for fall color.

Perennials perform better in soil that drains well. When digging beds this fall, add compost and soil conditioners to help with drainage.

For good selections, purchase daffodil, tulip, hyacinth and other spring blooming bulbs as they arrive at your nursery. Store in a cool area and plant in October when soil temperatures are in the 60's or cooler.

Fertilize chrysanthemums now for lots of blooms this fall.

Divide overcrowded groundcovers like ajuga and liriope and overgrown clumps of daylily, iris and coneflower this month.

Not all spring flowering bulbs bloom at the same time; check varieties and bloom times. For early color, "Early Sensation" is a daffodil variety that blooms in January in our area.

Fertilize bulbs when you plant them because it is hard to locate them until they come up next spring.

Edge and weed existing perennial beds. Use a granular weed-preventer (following label directions) to reduce winter weeds and apply mulch.

Plant your pansies and violas as the weather cools.

Remove faded blooms from pansies to keep them blooming and healthy.

**Lawns** - Fertilize fescue lawns following label instructions.

Rake up fallen leaves and add them to your compost pile to create a rich soil amendment. If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

**Soil Test** - Have your soil tested. Stop by your local Extension Office for a soil testing bag and instructions.

**Houseplants** - Lightly trim and check your houseplants that have spent the summer on your patio for insects and disease and if necessary, treat them (following label directions) before moving them inside for the winter.

Take cuttings of coleus and geraniums to grow inside until next spring.

Root leaves of African violet plants to give as Christmas gifts.

**Miscellaneous** - Begin collecting dried materials for fall and winter arrangements and decorations.

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