

## October

### Annuals:

- Continue to cover plants on cold nights.
- When you are finished with gardening for the year, clean out beds. Some annuals will re-seed themselves (cosmos, alyssum, cleome, snapdragons), so if you want those seeds to take off next spring, don't clean up those areas.
- Shred up fallen leaves and work them into your annual beds. The leaves will decompose over winter and improve your soil for next spring.

### Bulbs:

- Prepare soil for planting spring blooming bulbs if you have not done so.
- Begin planting Crocus, Daffodil, Grape Hyacinth, Hyacinth, Lily, Tulip, and other spring blooming bulbs.
- Add slow release fertilizer when planting.
- Clean-up other bulb beds. This will reduce the source of disease and insects for next spring.
- Finish digging and storing tender bulbs (Caladium, Calla, Canna, Dahlia, and Gladiola). Place them in peat moss and store them in a cool dark place for winter.
- Water freshly planted bulbs. If it is a dry fall, continue to water until the ground freezes.

### Fruit:

- Continue to harvest ripe fruit. Fall bearing raspberries and grapes will be ripe this month.
- Keep watering fruits in the fall, especially if it is a dry fall. Plants still need about 1" of water per week.
- Do not fertilize now.
- Prune out any diseased, broken, or damaged branches.

### Herbs and Vegetables:

- Continue to harvest ripe fruit.
- If you haven't already done so, make one fall harvest of rhubarb before the first killing frost. Cut back foliage once it is killed by frost.
- Continue cleaning up the debris left from this year's plants.
- Cover any tender plant that is still producing at night when frost is forecasted.

### Lawns:

- There is still time to plant sod, but remember to keep it moist.
- Water lawns only if they show signs of wilting.
- This is a very important time to fertilize. Apply 1-1.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet. This can be obtained by applying 2-3 pounds per 1000 square feet of sulfur-coated urea (45-0-0) or 5.5-8 pounds per 1000 square feet of an 18 percent nitrogen fertilizer.
- Apply a broadleaf herbicide to creeping charlie and other difficult to control weeds in mid to late October after a hard frost.

### Perennials, Ornamental Grasses, and ground covers:

- Finish planting this month.
- Dig and divide peonies after the tops have been killed by frost.
- Keep watering if the garden needs it until the ground is frozen.
- Do a fall cleanup, but leave plants that have winter interest or food for birds, such as black eyed susan, purple coneflower, liatris, and ornamental grasses. You may choose to leave all perennials and do a cleanup in the spring instead.
- Blow or rake tree and shrub leaves out of the perennial bed. Shred these leaves with the lawn mower and add them into the perennial bed for added nutrients for the soil.

### Roses:

- Finish planting shrub roses early this month to allow plenty of time to get established before winter.
- Continue to water as needed.
- Do not fertilize.
- Fall cleanup will help eliminate pest problems next spring.
- Apply a thick layer of leaf mulch to the base of the roses.

### Shrubs:

- Continue to plant and transplant shrubs. Finish planting evergreen early in the month to give them plenty of time to get established before winter.
- Water as needed. Keep an eye on evergreens during a dry fall as it is important that they not dry out before winter.

- Fall cleanup is the best way to reduce pest and disease problems for next spring. Also, rake leaves to discourage animal habitat.
- You can now begin dormant pruning, or you can wait until late winter (March). Wait until spring to prune evergreens. Do not prune any spring blooming shrubs.

**Trees:**

- There is still time to plant. Finish planting evergreens, birches, oaks, lindens, magnolias, and willows by the beginning of the month. This will give their slow growing roots time to get established before winter.
- Water as needed. Evergreens and new plantings need special attention in a dry fall. Do not let them dry out before winter.
- After the trees are dormant is a good time to fertilize. Only fertilize if you think the trees need it. If your trees had very early fall color, this may be a sign of stress. Use actual nitrogen to fertilize; the amount will depend on the size and variety of tree.
- Prune as needed after the trees have gone dormant.
- Continue raking leaves as they fall. Shredded leaves can be added to gardens to improve soil, and also as mulch for tender plants to help them overwinter better.