

## OCTOBER CHECK LIST

The biggest cause of winter kill is drought rather than cold. Give garden perennials, trees and shrubs a good deep soaking, providing the ground has not already frozen.

### ***VEGETABLE GARDEN***

- Clean up garden plants as soon as they are finished producing, or freeze. Can use a lawn mower to chop plants up for more even mixing with the soil.
- Fight seed bearing weeds this time of year. A single foxtail plant can produce 34,000 seeds and lots of future headaches, so catch them before they drop.
- If you had disease problems, be sure not to compost refuse, but dispose of it.
- This is a good time to spread compost, rotted manure, leaves, grass clippings, etc. over the garden, before fall tilling. Fall till if at all possible, to help kill overwintering insects.
- Oil wooden garden tool handles with a generous portion of linseed oil to condition before storing.
- If you are having a problem with perennial weeds such as thistles, make some fall applications of Roundup to start fighting back.

### ***ORCHARD AND FRUITS***

- Can prune dead wood, diseased or broken limbs.
- Cover strawberries with clean straw about 6 in. deep, or with a heavy row cover, about a month after the first frost (end of October).

### ***TREES AND SHRUBS***

- Plant containerized fruit trees, and ornamentals.
- Save fallen leaves to add to garden directly or to compost.
- Don't be alarmed if the inside needles of your evergreens turn bright yellow and drop off. This is a natural needle drop.
- Can remove broken, diseased, or dead wood in trees and shrubs.
- The best time for transplants is spring, just before bud break. It is possible to accomplish in fall if certain precautions are taken. Wait till the leaves have colored or fallen. Do not use the bare-root method. Use bare-root seedlings only in spring. Be certain to water thoroughly after planting to avoid winter desiccation, especially in evergreens. Place extra mulch around the base to help maintain soil moisture and delay soil freeze, allowing the plant to continue root replacement until soil temperatures reach below 40 degrees.

### ***LAWN***

- Continue watering lawn when needed.
- If you have perennial weeds in the lawn, such as dandelion, bindweed, clover or thistle, fall is a very effective time to use products containing 2,4-D, such as Weed-B-Gone.
- It doesn't pay to treat annual weeds like crabgrass, this time of year.
- If you want to do fall lawn seeding, it should be delayed until the soil freezes to insure the seed does not germinate until spring. The ideal seeding time is between Aug. 15 and September 15, during which the plant has sufficient time to establish before the ground freezes.

### ***FLOWER GARDEN***

- Fall planted pansies are in vogue now. They survive even fairly hard frosts to give late color, and if kept from dehydration in winter, will provide a showy border of color next spring.

- Cut back iris and other perennial flowers after frost kills vegetation.
- Continue planting spring bulbs. Renew old bulb beds by digging up and discarding weaker bulbs and replanting stronger, larger ones.
- Lift and store gladiolus corms and tuberous begonias after frost kills vegetation.
- Roses will benefit by not pruning them until next spring. They need four or more weeks to adjust for winter. Death of rose bushes is not always due to severe winters, but to the undormant conditions they are in when winter comes.
- Annual flowers such as petunias and marigolds, should be removed after a killing freeze. Amend soil and till up, for a head start on next spring.
- Cut off and discard peony tops to prevent disease once they freeze.
- Leave tops of chrysanthemums. These will catch snow, providing added winter protection and moisture.
- Is your garden a bit dull this time of year? Consider planting calendula, ornamental cabbage and kale, pansy, stock, dianthus, snapdragon and viola for next years fall color.

### ***HOUSEPLANTS***

- If moving houseplants indoors after a summer outdoors, check for and treat any insect pests.
- If you're interested in forcing tulip bulbs indoors following potting, they need 10-12 weeks of cold treatment. To accomplish this, place pot in the refrigerator at about 40 degrees. You may need to lightly water once a week to maintain moisture. Once cold treatment time is finished, place pot in a bright, sunny window in a cool room and enjoy.
- To produce blooms in poinsettias, start Oct. 1, covering plant with a light proof box, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00-8:00 am. at which time box is removed. Continue covering plant each evening till December 1, then move to showy bright area to enjoy.