

The November HORT REPORT

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

LAWN & TURF:

- Fertilize cool-season grasses like fescue with 1 lb. nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft.
- Continue to mow fescue as needed at 2 inches and water during dry conditions.
- Control broadleaf winter weeds with a pre-emergent.
- Keep falling leaves off fescue to avoid damage to the foliage.

FRUITS & NUTS:

- Delay pruning fruit trees until next February or March before bud breaks.
- Harvest pecans and walnuts immediately to eliminate deterioration of the kernel.

GENERAL LANDSCAPE:

- Prune deciduous trees in early part of winter. Prune only for structural and safety purposes.
- Apply dormant oil for scale infested trees and shrubs before temperatures fall below 40 degrees. Follow label directions.
- Continue to plant balled, bur lapped, and containerized trees.
- Watch for arborvitae aphids, which tolerate cooler temperatures in evergreen shrubs.
- Tulips can still be planted successfully through the middle of November.
- Leave foliage on asparagus, mums, and other perennials to help insulate crowns from harsh winter conditions.
- Bulbs like hyacinth, narcissus, and tulips can be potted in containers for indoor forcing.
- Left over garden seeds can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer until next planting season. Discard seeds over 3 years old.
- Gather and shred leaves to compost and use as mulch or till into garden plots.
- Clean and store garden and landscape tools. Coat with a light application of oil to prevent rusting. Drain fuel tanks, irrigation lines and hoses. Bring hoses indoors.

WHY DO LEAVES CHANGE COLOR?

Why do leaves change color? And how do the leaves decide which fiery color to turn? Ed Sharron, a science communication specialist with the National Park Services, explains the science behind the beautiful colors of fall.



Why do leaves turn red?

The more favorable warm, sunny day/cool night temperature cycles that occur in early autumn, the more likely that fall season is to experience vibrant colors with lots of reds. Leaves that get the most sunlight will develop red, as the sugars inside them are “baked” into the red anthocyanin pigments. This is the same process that causes many apples to only be red on the side facing the sun as they grow.

Why don't ALL leaves turn red?

Trees that don't receive as much sunlight will reveal the orange, yellow and brown colors, caused by the carotenoid and xanthophyll pigments that are already present in the leaves, but are hidden under the green until the chlorophyll breaks down.

How do leaves know when to call it quits?

The primary signal to trees is the length of day. Shorter days tell a tree it's time to stop photosynthesizing – the process by which sunlight and water combine to make food for the tree – and shut down for the winter.

Why do they turn spectacular colors before they fall off?

When photosynthesis shuts down, the chlorophyll in leaves that makes them appear green breaks down. What colors come next depend on the following:

- Relatively warm sunny days promote the creation of sugar within the leaves.
- Relatively cold, but not freezing, nights act as a trigger, causing the tree to begin to slowly create a protective layer of corky cells called the “abscission layer” between a leaf's stem and branch, which traps some of the sugars within the leaf.
- Sugars that escape being trapped in the leaf are stored in the tree trunk and roots and act as a kind of natural antifreeze that protects deciduous trees during winter.

Why do some leaves not change color and fall off?

Trees that hold onto their leaves year-round – modified leaves called “needles” – are evergreens like Pine, Hemlock, Spruce, and Fir. They have evolved to potentially photosynthesize year-round, though at a much slower rate in the cold months, and only on relatively warmer winter days.

How will climate change affect Fall foliage?

As a result of a warming climate and shifting precipitation patterns, the fall foliage season as we know it is likely to change in the coming years and decades. Drought and extended warmth into fall will likely result in duller colors and possibly the leaves just turning brown and falling off before they change colors.

BIRD FEEDING TIPS:

HOLD ONTO GOURDS & PUMPKINS!!!

- After Halloween those porch decorations, gourds, and pumpkins, can feed the wildlife.
- Cut a hole in each pumpkin and set under a feeder. Squirrels and other creatures enjoy the flesh, and birds pick at the seeds inside!
- When cooking Autumn dinners, save squash seeds – they're an excellent source of protein for birds. Just leave the seeds on a tray to dry for a day or two. In summer, try the same thing with melon seeds.

COMMON GARDENING TERMS

We have covered A-F in previous months... let's keep going!

- **GERMINATION:** The moment when a seed begins to grow.
- **GMO:** Stands for Genetically Modified Organism. Commonly means genetically engineered, indicating that the variety was manipulated at the gene level in a laboratory.
- **GYNOCIOUS:** A plant with only pollen-accepting flowers. A pollinator plant with pollen-producing flowers required for fruit production. These varieties are generally very productive and fast to mature.
- **HARDENING OFF:** The 7 to 10-day process of acclimating plants started indoors to outdoor conditions.
- **HEAT TOLERANCE:** The ability to resist heat-triggered issues like poor pollination, bitterness, premature flowering, and lack of fruit-set.
- **HEIRLOOM:** Open pollinated varieties over 50 years old are heirloom.
- **HYBRID:** Modern F1 (filial 1) type hybrid. Two specific parent varieties are bred to achieve a first-generation hybrid offspring. F1 hybrids are not open pollinated. Traditionally, “hybrid”

indicates any variety that had been made by cross-pollinating, even if that was completed by hand or insect.

- **INDETERMINATE:** Describes tomato varieties that continue to grow and produce tomatoes all season until first frost: therefore, you can find tomatoes at all stages on the plant at one time. Also called “pole” tomatoes because supports are helpful in guiding plants that can easily reach 6’ or more.

TIME TO TREAT TREES & SHRUBS

Nip the creepy crawlies in the bud! Pests will be back for your trees and shrubs this Spring and Summer. Protect them now with an application of dormant oil spray to control a wide range of critters, such as: Scale, Mites, Fruit Tree Rollers, Pear Psylla, Fall Army Worms, and Whiteflies. Using a horticultural oil will also give protection from Adelgids, Aphids, Leaf Hoppers, Mealybugs, Immature Plant Bugs, and Sawfly Larvae. It kills all stages of insects, including eggs.

HAVE YOU PLANTED YOUR SPRING FLOWERING BULBS?

NOW IS THE TIME! We still have a great selection of Spring blooming bulbs for Fall planting. The rule of thumb in bulb buying is... the bigger the bulb, the bigger the bloom! Come see how big our bulbs are! I love the anticipation as I look out my window and see the snow covering my spring bulb garden. I know that very soon the plants will emerge and begin to bloom, even as the snow is still on the ground! Tulips, Daffodils, Crocus, Iris, Allium, and Bare-Naked Ladies... *we've got 'em all!*

Get a jump on Spring with FALL SOWN FLOWERS

You can sow both perennial and many annual flowers in the Fall. Some perennials germinate best when stratified (exposed to a cold, moist period), which will naturally occur with Fall sowing. Some annual flower seeds can survive a cold, moist Winter, and germinate quickly in the Spring for earlier flowers than if started indoors, in spring. Whichever you sow this Fall, both lead to hassle-free color come next growing season.

PERENNIALS... 4 REASONS TO SOW IN THE FALL

1. **Hassle-free stratification:** Some perennial seeds need stratification, periods of cold temperatures combined with moisture, (like that from snow and rain during winter) to break a natural dormancy, allowing them to germinate. Take advantage of nature's process by sowing in the Fall.
2. **Earlier blooms and larger plants:** Perennials live for more than two years and can take several years to get to their mature size. By sowing perennial seeds in the Fall, the plants will be more mature the following year compared to those sown in the Spring. Sowing perennial seeds in the Fall allows many types to flower their first growing season.
3. **Care-free moisture management:** Most regions have winter rain and/or snow, providing essential moisture without you having to lift a finger. Cool weather also reduces the need to water as frequently, when rain and/or snow is not adequate.
4. **Control weeds with ease:** Cool weather slows weed germination and growth, making your nicely prepped and sown garden area easier to maintain in the upcoming season.

TIPS FOR PERENNIAL SUCCESS:

- Sow perennials that DO NOT NEED stratification at least 8–10 weeks before your average first fall frost. This allows time for the seed to germinate, and plants to establish a root system large enough to survive the Winter.
- Sow perennials that NEED stratification after a hard, killing frost. This ensures that they will not sprout until the following Spring.
- MARK THE SPOT. Label the area of sown seeds with garden stakes. Be sure to water late-summer and fall-sown perennial seeds during dry spells in winter, just as you do your trees.
- Forget-Me-Nots, Hyssop, Lavender, Russell Lupine Blend, Milkweed, Penstemon, Bluebonnet, and Yarrow are some varieties that BENEFIT from stratification.

ANNUALS... 3 REASONS TO SOW IN THE FALL

1. **Earlier blooms:** Select annuals will emerge as soon as Mother Nature cooperates, allowing the plants to germinate and bloom earlier than those spring-sown annuals.
2. **Robust plants:** Direct sowing, when possible, results in the most robust plants. When seeds are started indoors, they are a bit spoiled from even, moderate temperatures, and refined growing mediums. Transplanting usually results in some transplant shock while new root growth navigates native soil, and plants get used to the temperature swings in their new home.
3. **Ease:** Skip the indoor lighting, potting, and care that comes from growing transplants by direct sowing. Some gardeners find they have more time in the fall, rather than spring, so sow a little extra to enjoy next year.

TIPS FOR ANNUAL SUCCESS:

- If you live in an area with frost and snow, sow the seeds AFTER a killing freeze, but BEFORE snow (late October or early November in most areas). You can also sow in late winter, between snows. The snow helps bury seeds and insulates them, helping to retain moisture.
- Mixing a little sand with the seeds not only helps space seeds more evenly, but also gives you a better visual aid of where you sowed in case you need to water during dry spells in winter.
- MARK THE SPOT. Don't forget to mark what and where you sowed with some handy garden stakes, so you don't accidentally weed-out emerging flowers!
- Check out these annuals you can successfully sow in the fall... Bachelor Buttons, Bluebonnets, Larkspur, Love-In-A-Mist, Lupine, and Poppies.