

# The October **HORT REPORT**

## **LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE**

### *LAWN & TURF:*

- Continue to replant or establish cool-season lawns, like fescue.
- The mowing height for fescue should be lowered to approximately 2½ inches for fall and winter cuttings.
- Broadleaf weeds, like dandelions, can be easily controlled with a pre-emergent.
- Mow and neatly edge warm season lawns before the first killing frost.

### *VEGETABLE GARDENS:*

- Dig sweet potatoes and harvest pumpkins and winter squash.
- Remove green fruit from tomato plants when frost threatens.
- Harvest oriental persimmons and paw paws as they begin to change color.
- There is still time to plant radishes and mustard in the garden.
- Use a cold frame device to plant spinach, lettuce, and various other cool-season crops for production through most of the winter.
- Plant cool-season cover crops, such as: Austrian winter peas, buckwheat, crimson clover, and rye in otherwise bare garden plots.
- Remove all debris from your garden to prevent overwintering of various garden pests.
- Start new plantings. Prepare beds with plenty of organic matter.

### *GENERAL LANDSCAPE:*

- Plant cool-season annuals, such as: pansies, ornamental cabbage and kale, snapdragons and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.
- Plant spring-flowering bulbs, such as: tulips, crocus, hyacinths and daffodils.
- Groundcovers, such as: ajuga, vinca, English ivy, alyssum, moneywort, thrift, phlox, and leadwort are excellent companion plants for bulbs.
- Peonies, daylilies, and other spring-flowering perennials should be divided or planted now.
- Dig out tender perennials like cannas, dahlias, and caladiums. Store them in a cool dry place.
- Many perennials can be planted at this time, and we have a good selection available right now at our Chickasha store.
- Now is the time to plant mums and asters. Be sure to keep them watered during dry conditions. Don't crowd when planting since they take a couple of years to reach maturity.
- Check and treat houseplants for insect pests before bringing them indoors and repot root-bound plants.

### *WATER GARDENS:*

- Move tropical water garden plants indoors when water temperatures are near 50 degrees.
- Close the water garden for the winter by placing hardy plants in the deeper areas of the pool.
- Stop feeding the fish.
- Cover with bird netting to catch dropping leaves in winter months.

**FLOWER BULBS IN THE GARDEN:  
LOOK FORWARD TO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL!**

It seems we can all visualize a spring garden full of blooms and fragrance. Other than the initial planting, flower bulbs require little else. Just plant and forget... one and done! DIG, DROP, DONE! Now is the time to get your bulbs in for those beautiful spring flowers.

So, here's the MAGIC! Bulbs that naturalize do their own garden work every year. They come up in all their glory and bloom without you having to lift a finger. When a plant "naturalizes" it becomes comfortable in the environment into which it is introduced. And, as they increase in number, your floral display grows larger every year. Bulbs are underground flower incubators. Deep in the bulb, a tiny baby flower is resting until it's time to burst into life. Surrounded inside with enough perfect food to nourish it through long dormancy periods, and a covering that protects it until it opens, the bulb nurtures it until it is the perfect time to sprout, and then it sends forth a magnificent specimen. When the flower had finished its bloom cycle, the drying leaves feed the bulb until they wilt away for the winter. Whether corms, tubers, or true bulbs, the flower bulb is a wonder of nature that not only cares for itself underground but reproduces without any effort on our part. COME SEE US TODAY FOR ALL YOUR SPRING BULB NEEDS... WE CARRY A GREAT SELECTION!

### **Bulb Rules:**

- The bigger the bulb, the BIGGER THE FLOWER.
- Bulbs should be planted at a depth of twice their height.
- Most bulbs require good soil drainage.
- Green foliage MUST BE ALLOWED TO RIPEN AND TURN BROWN... no braiding, cutting off, or any other cutesy stuff.
- Shop early for best selections.
- Read labels for planting instructions.
- Be wary of a bargain.
- Inspect the bulbs before you buy them. Healthy bulbs are generally FIRM BULBS.
- Steer clear of bulbs that are mushy or show signs of mold or fungus.

## **IT'S FALL YA'LL...**

### **TIME TO PRUNE YOUR PERENNIAL HIBISCUS**

Commonly known as 'Hardy Hibiscus', the perennial hibiscus may look delicate, but this tough plant produces huge exotic-looking flowers that rival those of a tropical hibiscus. When it comes to pruning, there's no need for stress. Although this easy-care plant requires very little pruning, regular maintenance will keep it healthy and promote bigger and better flowers.

Cut any dead stems or branches down to 8-12 inches in fall, just before applying a protective layer of mulch. Pull back mulch in the spring when there is no longer the danger of a hard freeze hitting. If any branches freeze during the winter, cut these to the ground.

When new growth appears, you can trim and shape the plant as desired. Keep in mind that perennial hibiscus is a slow starter, so don't worry if no growth is present in early spring. It may take a string of warm days before the plant decides to emerge. Pinch back growing tips with your fingers when they reach a height of about 6 inches. Pinching will encourage the plant to branch out, which means a bushier plant with more blooms. Don't wait too long, as flowers bloom on 'NEW GROWTH' and pinching too late could delay flowering. However, if growth appears spindly or thin, you CAN pinch the plant's "GROWING TIPS" again once they reach about 10-12 inches.

Deadhead wilted blooms throughout the season to keep the plant neat and encourage a longer blooming period. To deadhead, simply pinch the old blooms with your fingernails, or snip them with pruners. Some types of perennial hibiscus can be rambunctious self-seeders. If this is a concern, be vigilant about deadheading old blooms, which will prevent the plant from setting seed.