



“From the Potting Shed”
Riverview Garden Club
Helpful Hints – November, 2024

Days are shorter and the air is colder – winter is on its way! Time to put our gardens to bed for the winter and finish up some late fall garden chores.

Things to do in the garden this month...

- After frost takes annuals down, pull the annual plants and put them on the compost pile.
- Unless there are disease problems, leave perennials standing until spring. Most will add winter interest and seeds for the birds too.
- Empty, wash and store your containers. Use a dolly to move heavy or large ones. Dump out the potting mix and remove loose dirt and debris with a stiff brush.
- Turn the pots over and store them in a protected spot up off the ground. A couple of 2x4s are enough height to keep moisture from accumulating around the lip of the pot and cracking it.
- Protect trees and shrubs from winter weather and scavenging animals.
- Sharpen and put away tools.
- Cover new perennials, and those that have a tendency to heave, with mulch.
- Empty the garden hose and coil it up. Also, empty and store the birdbath unless you will be using a heater.
- Use a garden-friendly de-icer or coarse sand instead of salt to melt ice from sidewalks and driveways.
- Dream about next year’s garden and order new plants and seeds you plan to start indoors.

Chores and Maintenance:

- Continue to thoroughly water trees, shrubs, lawn areas and planting beds until ground freezes
- Complete removal of fallen leaves and debris to protect from overwintering of insects and disease organisms in all vegetable garden beds ONLY. Perennials gardens will benefit from a layer of insulating leaves and many beneficial insects like ladybugs rely upon seasonal debris as habitat to survive the winter.
- Cut back perennials to 4 to 5 inches, but leave ornamental grasses to provide winter interest until spring
- Mulch boxwood and broad-leaved evergreens before the ground freezes
- Mulch flower beds to keep the ground temperature stable and prevent winter injury from frost heaving

- Provide burlap windbreaks for boxwood and broad-leaved evergreens; install stakes before the ground freezes
- Protect trees from mouse damage with wire mesh trunk guards
- Protect shrubs from deer with burlap or netting
- Mow lawn one final time to height of 1 1/2 to 2"
- Aerate soil around rose roots and hill up earth 10 to 12" around the crown after a heavy frost
- Continue to feed the birds

Planting:

- Continue to plant deciduous trees and shrubs until the ground freezes
- Complete planting spring-flowering bulbs
- Propagate deciduous shrubs, such as hydrangea, viburnum and weigela; and evergreen, such as holly, juniper and yew
- Pot hardy spring bulbs for indoor forcing

Pruning and Fertilizing:

- You should NOT fertilize trees and shrubs now. Your plants don't need it as they prepare for dormancy and most of what you apply will wash away during our frequent winter thaws. Plan instead to feed your plants in early spring when the buds break.
- Incorporate lime and fertilizer in the annual and vegetable gardens for next growing season
- Complete pruning of late-blooming trees and shrubs after the first frost when the plants have entered dormancy.
- If needed, prune early spring-flowering shrubs to remove diseased and damaged branches but preserve buds

Indoors

- Give houseplants as much light as possible as lower light days begin
- Continue to let up on fertilizing indoor plants until spring
- Provide houseplants with increased humidity; mist often or place plants over a tray of moist pebbles
- Pot up prepared bulbs for indoor forcing
- Begin to increase the time between waterings, but do not cut back on the amount of water

Resources:

New York Botanic Gardens Plant and Research Guides, Fall Gardening Chores: November, 2024.

Garden Gate Magazine, Garden Gate Notes Weekly Newsletter, September 26, 2024.