



## **“From the Potting Shed”**

Riverview Garden Club – November Helpful Hints

2021

November is a month to finish up all those chores that need to be done before winter. Put away the tools, finish planting the bulbs, get the outdoor furniture put away or covered, keep mowing the lawn and be sure to rake up those leaves. *Leave the garden in the fall the way you want to find it in the spring!*

### **What to do this month...**

#### **TREES & SHRUBS**

**Transplant deciduous trees and shrubs** if weather permits and the ground shows no signs of freezing. Focus on the addition of fall and winter plants to the landscape.

**Clear away turf and weeds** from the area right around the trunks of fruit trees and ornamentals to reduce winter damage by rodents. You might consider hardware cloth collars put in place year-round as well.

**Clean up under fruit trees**, since fallen fruit and foliage left to overwinter invites added pests and diseases next season. Technically, “mummies” (fruit still hanging) should be removed, too, but you may choose to leave those for the birds.

**Keep watering woody plants** until frost is in the ground if conditions are dry so that they enter dormancy in a well-hydrated state. Evergreens (needled ones and broadleaf types like rhododendron, too) are particularly vulnerable to desiccation and winter burn. Consider applying antidesiccants as well.

**Look for dead, damaged or diseased branches** in trees and shrubs and **prune them out**. This is especially important before winter arrives with its harsher weather, where weaknesses left in place invite tearing and further damage to trees and shrubs. Remove suckers and water sprouts, too.

#### **VEGETABLES, FRUITS & HERBS**

**Mulch strawberry plants** with a couple of inches of straw.

**Till and prepare the soil now for bare-root** strawberry and asparagus plants that are ordered over the winter so they can be planted extra early come spring.

**Prepare a seed bed now** for peas and spinach for next spring, to get a head start on such early crops.

**Pot up and bring in** parsley and chives for offseason use. A few garlic cloves in a pot will yield a supply of chive-like (but spicier) garlic greens all winter for garnish. If you have a very sunny window, you may try to plant basil seeds in pots to add to your indoor herb garden.

**Get your garlic in!** Ideally garlic would be in the ground a month before frost. Prepare a sunny spot, and plant each clove 1-2 inches deep and 6 inches apart in the row, with about 12 inches between rows.

## **FLOWER GARDEN**

**Protect roses from damage** by mounding up their crowns with a 6- to 12-inch layer of soil before the ground freezes. *After the ground is frozen*, add a layer of leaf mulch to further insulate.

**Clean areas around peonies, irises** and other flowers that are prone to fungal diseases. Cut down iris foliage and rake well under roses.

**Cannas, dahlias and elephant ears** need to be dug up carefully for indoor storage. Once frost blackens the foliage, cut back the tops to 6 inches and dig carefully, then brush or wash off soil and let dry for two weeks or so to cure. Store in a dry spot like unheated basement or crawl space around 40-50 degrees, in boxes or pots filled with bark chips or peat moss.

**Don't deadhead some perennials, biennials and annuals** if you want these plants to self sow. If you choose to deadhead, make sure to shake pods around before removing plant carcasses. Nicotiana, poppies, larkspur, sage and many others fall into this leave-alone group. Grasses, cone flowers and other seed heads can be left for the birds all winter.

**Prepare and create new beds** for future plantings by smothering grass or weeds with layers of corrugated cardboard, layers of brown bags or thick layers of newspaper. Wet the paper coverings to hold them in place. Then add layers of dried leaves, compost/manure, garden soil and peat moss. Cover the area with plastic to speed up the decomposition and prevent weed seeds from blowing into the new bed. I've had excellent results with this "lasagna" no-dig method of creating new planting beds! Come spring you'll have great soil ready for perennial transplants, annuals seedlings and seeds.

## **LAWNS**

**Keep mowing the lawn** until the grass stops growing, and make the last cut a short one. Let clippings lie on the lawn to return Nitrogen to the soil, and mow over fallen leaves to shred if not too thick, or rake them off before snow comes.

**Service the mower** after the final mowing, rather than in the spring rush, then store without gas in the tank. Run it dry.

## **COMPOST & MULCH**

**Start a "leaves only" pile** alongside your compost heap as a future source of soil-improving leaf mold, or when partly rotted to use as mulch. To save space and speed decomposition, run over the leaves with the mower to pre-shred.