



"From the Potting Shed"

Riverview Garden Club – September Helpful Hints

2021

As your September garden bursts with late-season color from Sedum, Aster, Sunflowers, Zinnias, and more, hopefully you feel a sense of accomplishment for everything you were able to grow this past season. September brings an abundance of cutting back, cleaning up, and planting!

What to do this month...

Weeding: Spend 1-2 hours per week keeping up with weeding in your garden. Diligent weeding helps prevent weeds from going to seed and also prevents disease in next season's garden.

Pruning and Fertilizing: Stop pruning and fertilizing. At this point in the season, pruning and fertilizing only promotes new growth that most likely will not make it through the winter.

Seeds: If you want annuals to self-seed, stop deadheading in September. Annual Poppies, Zinnias, Sunflowers, and more will drop their seeds and (most likely) come back next year. Leave Echinacea, Sedum, Grasses, and Clematis alone to provide habitat and food for birds over the winter months. These blooms also add texture and interest to the winter garden.

Journaling: Write in your garden journal. Take note of what grew well, dividing your gardens up into sections as it makes sense (containers, vegetable garden, annuals, perennials). This will be a big help when you are planning your garden over the winter months.

Cleaning Up: Start cleaning up plants as they fade. Cut back any perennial that is diseased or that has started to turn yellow, including Daylilies, Iris, Peonies, Bee Balm, and more. When cutting back diseased plant material, sanitize your pruners/clippers with alcohol or sanitizing wipes then discard the diseased cuttings in the trash not your compost!

Dividing: Dig up and divide Daylilies, Iris, Hostas, and more in September if they have become overcrowded or have outgrown the space. Dig up and store tender bulbs and tubers such as Dahlias, Begonias, Gladiolus, and more.

Planting: Add perennials and spring-blooming bulbs to your garden in September. Perennials planted in the fall offer up bigger growth and often bloom in the first season. Continue regular watering of transplants. Bulbs like Crocus, Hyacinths, Tulips, Daffodils, Allium, and more need the overwintering period in order to bloom in the spring.

Harvesting: Vegetable crops will begin to take longer to ripen in September. Give melons, limas, and tomatoes more time to ripen naturally. Eggplants are ready for harvest when they are shiny. Beans, cucumbers, melons, zucchini, and summer squash will not ripen or mature once they are picked. They will keep for a week or two in the refrigerator. Large cabbages and broccoli side shoots will come to harvest. Cut-and-come again harvest of lettuce, spinach, and greens will stimulate new fall growth. Dig regular potatoes and sweet potatoes as late as possible, just before frost threatens. Pick all tomatoes, peppers, beans, vine crops, winter squashes, and other tender vegetables before the first hard frost.

Mulching: As you cut plants back and continue to weed, add a top layer of shredded bark mulch or leaves in all of your garden beds to provide a nice layer of protection for the winter months. The more weeding and mulching you do in September, the fewer weeds you'll have to deal with in the spring.

Bringing Houseplants Indoors: You will need to bring your plants indoors before nighttime temperatures dip below 45 degrees (F). Gradually reintroduce your houseplants back indoors first by bringing them indoors at night outdoors during the day. Avoid sudden changes in temperature, light, and humidity which can cause yellowed leaves, dieback, wilting, and even death. Inspect plants for insects and diseases, and treat as appropriate before bringing plants back inside. If some of your plants need repotting, make sure you have potting soil (not garden soil), and containers.

Prepping for Spring: The more chores you complete in the September garden the less work for the early spring. If you're thinking of adding a pollinator garden to your landscape, try to prep the area and get as much planted as you can this fall. Come spring, the plants will be much larger and that area will be primed and ready to add in annuals and other varieties.