



## **“From the Potting Shed”**

Riverview Garden Club – Helpful Hints

September, 2023

As we welcome the autumn season, there are many things to tend to in our gardens. Here are some tips to keep your garden going until the first frost. This is a great time for dividing and transplanting perennials, adding trees and shrubs, refreshing summer containers, caring for your lawn, planting spring bulbs and preparing your vegetable garden. So, dig in and have a Happy Fall!

### **Things to do this month...**

#### In the flower garden:

- Add color to your garden with mums and pansies.
- Divide and transplant perennials like hostas, daylilies, Rudbeckia, Shasta daisies, etc. Keep them well watered.
- Plant new hardy perennial plants in the cooler days of September. This gives them plenty of time for roots to get established before winter sets in.
- Continue to deadhead and de-leaf all annual and perennial flowers to encourage additional blooms. Unless you want to save seeds or let some self-sow.
- Remove and replace any annuals that are exhausted and no longer flowering.
- Remember to water your flowers if your rainfall is low this month.
- Don't forget to weed to prevent a late-season weed takeover in your flower beds.
- Refresh your annual containers and pots with cool-season flowers such as pansies, ornamental cabbage, kale, chrysanthemums, or fall-blooming asters.
- Leave sunflower, cosmos, zinnia, and marigold seedheads in place for birds to feed on during the fall and winter.
- Order spring-blooming bulbs that you'll plant later this month and in October or November. Daffodils are ok to plant late in September, but save the tulips for October planting.
- Order spring-blooming bulbs to pot up and force indoors over the winter.
- Assess areas in the garden that may need new or replacement plants next spring.

#### In the vegetable garden:

- Over the next 4-6 weeks, you'll have an abundance of produce. Check your vegetable garden every day and harvest vegetables as they ripen.
- Pick warm-season crops like peppers and tomatoes as soon as possible. If an early frost threatens, cover these plants with frost fabric or light blankets. Don't use plastic sheeting for frost protection.
- Harvest unripe tomatoes before the nights get cold and ripen them indoors.
- Harvest late-season squash and early pumpkins near the end of the month.
- Harvest any cool-season lettuces, spinach, peas, radishes, or Swiss chard you may have planted in August.
- Maintain good sanitation in your vegetable garden. Remove diseased and spent plants immediately.
- Compost only healthy plant matter. Don't put diseased plants or weed seeds in your compost pile.

For the lawn:

- Begin fall seeding or sodding of cool-season grasses.
- Keep your newly planted lawn areas moist, but not wet. If you core aerate, don't cover the holes with compost. The holes are the perfect germination chamber for the seeds.
- Don't cut newly seeded lawns until they are at least 2 or 3 inches tall.
- Mid-month is a good time to apply fertilizer to your lawn. Choose an organic fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio.
- Moderate temperatures this month along with cool nights and adequate rainfall (or irrigation) will encourage grass growth, making September a good time to feed turf. Apply one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn.
- Don't let your lawn dry out too much in September. Fall lawns are gearing up for winter survival. Your lawn won't be able to store as much energy as it needs to if it doesn't have enough water.
- Keep on top of your lawn weeding chores this month. It's a good time to pull perennial weeds. Their root systems will weaken over the winter and hopefully die.
- If you have an irrigation system, call to schedule your sprinkler blow-out for October, if you don't do this yourself.

For trees and shrubs:

- If you must move a small tree or shrub this year, wait until they change color or drop their leaves before planting them or digging them up and moving them to new sites. They won't suffer as much transplant shock when moved.
- Plant Broadleaved and needled evergreens, by October 1st.
- Water them at planting time and each week until the ground freezes.
- Water large trees and shrubs, especially evergreens, until the ground freezes hard. Evergreens lose moisture through their needles all winter and need adequate water to avoid winter-burn or desiccated needles.
- Wait until October to fertilize any tree or shrub that looks like it might benefit from fertilizing due to stunted growth, failure to fully flower or leaf out, or has undersized fruit or off-color foliage.
- September is a great month to plant new trees. Most nurseries put their remaining trees and shrubs on sale this time of year. Be sure to choose healthy plants and avoid any that don't look robust. Water them at planting time and every week until the ground freezes.
- Don't fertilize any newly planted shrubs until next spring.
- Start spraying deer repellants on trees and shrubs and re-apply after rain.
- Protect tree trunks from deer with metal fencing. Surround the trunk, keeping the fencing 2 feet away from the trunk by using metal or wooden stakes to hold up the fencing.
- Protect trees from rabbit and vole damage by erecting a wire cylinder made out of hardware cloth. Just be sure to bury the hardware cloth 6 inches below the soil.
- Protect newly planted shrubs from deer by creating a cage with metal fencing held up with metal or wooden stakes. Make sure the cage is 2-3 feet taller than the shrub to prevent them from eating the top of the shrub.
- If needed, prune early spring-flowering shrubs to remove diseased and damaged branches. Be careful to preserve the buds.

***Happy Fall Gardening!***