



"From the Potting Shed"

Riverview Garden Club – Helpful Hints
October, 2024

As summer transitions into fall, there is still plenty to do in our October gardens. Not sure what you should be doing in the garden this month? Check out these October Helpful Hints for ways you can extend your garden season, harvest more veggies, keep your garden in great shape, and prepare for next spring.

Things to do in the garden this month...

Autumn Cleanup & Prep

Keep October gardens tidy to control pests and diseases. Try not to procrastinate on this one! Keeping your gardens free of debris and diseased plants will keep your gardens healthier for years to come.

- If perennial plants far outgrown their space in the garden, take time to divide them and settle them into their new locations before a hard freeze sets in.
- Compost fallen leaves and healthy garden debris.
- Pull up and discard in the trash any diseased plant foliage away from your gardens or compost pile.
- Add grass clippings and fallen leaves to your compost heap and turn the pile one last time for the year.
- Clear garden beds of plant debris and clean up dropped fruit from around fruit trees.
- Remove spent vines from climbing structures and fences.
- Clean up the lawn of any stray branches or sticks. They will make great kindling for a brisk evening's fire pit.
- As neighbors are out raking their leaves, ask if you can take them off of your hands. Shredded leaves are great for adding brown matter to compost piles, and they also make a fine organic mulch for garden beds.
- While it's best to stop pruning trees and shrubs at this point in the year, you can still clean up dead limbs or hanging, broken branches.
- Now that berry bushes have finished producing, cut back the canes halfway. Prune away any dead and nonproductive canes. Mulch the berry patch well to insulate the plants for the upcoming winter.
- Continue to add kitchen scraps and brown matter to your compost pile.
- Cut back any newly formed roses and remove and discard any part of the plant which looks diseased or plagued by pests.
- Prune dead or diseased vines from grapevines.
- Add a layer of compost to gardens to reward the soil and boost its nutrient levels for all of its hard work. You can also plant a cover crop of rye this month.

- You can leave perennials alone and allow them to die back completely. This is best for the plant, and leaving unharvested seedpods intact also feeds the migrating birds and other wildlife who are stocking up for winter. Additionally, leave a few sunflower heads intact.
- Tidy up your fall planters by deadheading spent flowers.
- Fertilize your fall planters to keep them growing strong.
- Thin out any root vegetable seedlings that were sown in the garden last month.
- Bring any tropical plants or houseplants indoors in preparation for the winter.

Weeding the Garden in October

Organically weeding your garden continues to be a priority this month. Pull weeds early or after rainfall and dispose of them so they don't have an opportunity to go to seed and proliferate. Eliminating weeds regularly works well over time to lessen the number of weeds that compete with your plants in subsequent years.

Mulching for Fall

- Mimic nature by covering bare spots in your October gardens with mulch. This practice deters weeds from developing there, enriches the soil as the mulch breaks down, and provides a habitat for beneficial insects.
- Add a generous layer of mulch or a cover crop to vacant garden beds.
- Mulch newer perennial plantings and bulbs to insulate root systems during the upcoming winter months.
- Mulch rose bushes, citrus trees, and grapevines for extra winter protection.

Watering in the Fall

- Water in recently planted perennials deeply. Not only do the roots need the water to establish themselves before a harsh winter, but water also acts as an insulator.
- Water your fall container flowers and plants.

Indoor Fall Planting

Zone 7 can start seeds for cool-season favorites for later transplanting in cold frames or greenhouses for a winter harvest. Sow some herb seeds in containers indoors and place them in a sunny window so you can enjoy a harvest of fresh essences all winter long!

Outdoor Fall Planting

Extend your garden season by planting in hoop houses, greenhouses, and cold frames. Sow seeds for:

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| • Spinach | Carrots |
| • Mustard | Parsnips |
| • Turnips | Cabbage |
| • Radishes | Broccoli |
| • Bok Choy | Cauliflower |
| • Garlic | Lettuces |
| • Shallots | Beets |

Continue to plant new perennials, trees, and shrubs. Plant early in the day and water in well, as the sun can still be intense during the afternoons.

Plant your fall bulbs if you have not done so already. They will provide a great deal of joy and excitement when they emerge from the earth after a long, cold winter. You can also plant native plants this month. Consider sowing some wildflower seeds and see what comes up.

October Garden Harvesting

Add these vegetable to the October Checklist to harvest and enjoy:

- Spinach
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Parsnips
- Brussel Sprouts
- Potatoes
- Cabbage
- Corn
- Swiss Chard
- Carrots

Begin digging up sweet potatoes, other root vegetables and harvesting pumpkins, gourds, and squash.

If you have any herbs still producing in the garden, harvest the whole plant and hang them upside down in a cool, dry place to dry them or freeze them.

You can start clearing out your summer garden if you haven't done so already. This will make space for your fall and winter gardens. Note that if you still have green or partially ripe tomatoes clinging to the vine, you can remove them all right now and use them in green tomato recipes.

Resource: Kellogg Garden Blog, October Garden Checklist for Zones 6-8

Happy Fall Gardening!