



Corner Copia Courier

Passion, Plants, People

Fall into the Season at Corner Copia Gardens

Every year, the Alabama summer clings. There is always that two or three-day break in late August when the early morning temperature feels that tiny bit like fall. The air is dry and a wind from the North promises to sweep summer away.

In the rest of the country that might be true, but here we all know it's just a tease. But as September turns to October the anticipation is palpable. One of these mid-October mornings our six-month summer season will officially come to an end and we will be rummaging in the backs of our closets for fall's first sweatshirt.

At Corner Copia Gardens, that anticipation is just as high. With cooler temperatures and the sun arcing ever lower in the Southern sky, plants inevitably begin to change their rhythms.

Whereas spring and summer are the active growing seasons, fall and winter are a time for the plants to slow growth and stretch their root structure wider and

deeper to better support the plant in the next growing season.

On the pages of this newsletter, you will find a lot of advice about fall as the optimal planting time for trees and shrubs.

There are some examples of the many new plants we have brought in just for fall, including the region's largest selection of camillias. Most plants put on their flowering show during the active growing season, but camillia varieties are just starting their show. Between now and April, each variety will take its turn gracing the fall and winter garden.

Copper, the canine companion of Corner Copia Garden's owner Michelle Prouty Johns, makes an appearance in his new guest column.

Finally, look for What's New and our Upcoming Events which include two live music events and our family-friendly 3rd Annual Scarecrows in the Garden.



Fall is Planting Time!

Why autumn is the optimal time to get ‘em in the ground

Every autumn, as the air turns crisp and leaves blaze with color, many gardeners begin to put their tools away for the season. But fall isn't the end of the gardening year—it's one of the very best times to start something new. If you're considering adding trees or shrubs to your landscape, autumn provides conditions that set plants up for long-term success.

Why Fall Works in Nature's Favor

When we think about planting, spring usually comes to mind. Garden centers are bursting with fresh stock, the weather is warming, and there's a natural impulse to begin anew. Yet horticulturists often recommend fall instead, because plants respond differently to seasonal cues than humans do.

In the spring, trees and shrubs put tremendous energy into pushing out leaves, flowers, and new shoots. This rapid top growth competes with root development, which can leave a newly planted specimen struggling to take hold before the summer heat arrives. In fall, however, that equation shifts. As days shorten and plants prepare for dormancy, they stop expending energy on foliage and blooms. Instead, their efforts go underground—literally—into strengthening root systems. So while the branches may appear still, beneath the soil a powerful process is underway. Planting in autumn gives trees and shrubs the chance to build robust roots without the stress of supporting active growth above ground. By the time spring rolls around, these plants are already established and ready to surge forward with healthier, more resilient growth.

Seasonal Advantages of Fall Planting

1. **Cooler Temperatures Mean Less Stress** Transplant shock is a common challenge when moving plants into the ground. Cooler fall weather reduces that stress, helping new trees and shrubs settle in comfortably.
2. **Warm Soil Extends the Growing Window** Soil holds warmth much longer than the air. Even after the first frosts, the ground remains warm enough to encourage root development well into late fall.
3. **Natural Rainfall Offers Reliable Moisture** Autumn often brings consistent rains, keeping soil evenly moist and reducing the need for constant supplemental watering.
4. **A Head Start on Spring Growth** By the time winter loses its grip, fall-planted trees and shrubs already have an established root network. This allows them to leaf out earlier with greater vigor compared to plants set in the ground in spring.

Choosing the Right Trees and Shrubs

Almost any hardy species can be planted in fall, but certain types adapt especially well.

- **Deciduous Trees:** Maples, oaks, elms, and dogwoods establish quickly in fall.
- **Shrubs:** Viburnums, other hedging shrubs and hydrangeas can all benefit from autumn planting.
- **Evergreens:** Hollies, boxwoods, pines, and spruce can be planted in fall, with extra watering.

Practical Tips for Successful Fall Planting

- **Timing Is Everything:** Plant at least six weeks before the ground typically freezes in your region. This window gives roots time to grow before dormancy fully sets in.
- **Dig Wide, Not Deep:** A hole should be two to three times wider than the root ball but only as deep as the root system itself. This encourages outward root spread and prevents settling.
- **Water Thoroughly:** Even in cool weather, newly planted trees and shrubs need consistent moisture. Water deeply once or twice a week unless there is an extended period below freezing. Water as if you want to soak the **BOTTOM** of the root ball you just planted.
- **Mulch for Insulation:** Apply 2–4 inches of organic mulch around the base, keeping it a few inches away from the trunk. Mulch moderates soil temperature and locks in moisture.
- **Protect from Winter Winds:** Young evergreens, in particular, can suffer from winter burn during an extended cold snap. Burlap wraps or temporary windbreaks can help to shield them in exposed sites.

A Long-Term Investment

Planting in fall is more than just a seasonal chore—it's an investment in the future of your landscape. The trees and shrubs you put in the ground now will shape your garden's character for decades to come, providing shade, beauty, wildlife habitat and even cleaner air. By giving them the advantage of fall's natural conditions, you ensure they begin that journey with strength and stability.

So as you rake leaves and sip cider this autumn, consider digging a few holes, too. Your garden will thank you in the spring, and for many years beyond.

Plant it!

How to give your new beauty its best chance

1. Pick the Right Spot

- Match the site's sunlight (full sun, part shade, or shade) to the plant's needs.
- Check drainage: avoid soggy areas where water collects.

2. Dig the Hole

- Dig a hole **2–3 times wider** than the root ball, but only as deep as the roots.
- The top of the root ball should sit **level with or slightly above** the soil line.

3. Prepare the Roots

- **Container plants:** Gently loosen circling roots so they grow outward.
- **Balled-and-burlapped plants:** Cut away twine, wire, and burlap from the top and sides.

4. Set the Plant

- Place it upright in the center of the hole.
- Ensure the **root flare** (where the trunk widens at the base) is visible just above ground.

5. Backfill the Hole

- Refill with a 50/50 mix of the **native soil** you and soil conditioner to improve drainage and add nutrients.
- Lightly firm the soil to remove large air pockets, but don't stomp it down.

6. Water Thoroughly

- Water slowly and deeply to settle the soil.
- Keep watering weekly (or more in dry spells) until the ground freezes.

7. Mulch the Base

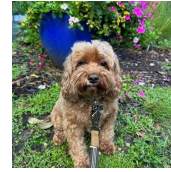
- Spread 2–4 inches of mulch around the root zone in a **donut shape** (not touching the trunk).
- Mulch conserves moisture, insulates roots, and reduces weeds.

8. Stake if Necessary

- Only stake in windy or unstable sites.
- Use soft ties and remove after the first year.

9. Care in the First Years

- Water regularly during the first 1–2 years—this is when roots are establishing.
- Wait until the next growing season before adding fertilizer.



Copper's Corner

By way of introduction, I suppose I should admit right from the start that I am a dog ... not just any dog, of course, but a Cavapoo (Cavalier King Charles Spaniel/Poodle cross).

As you may have guessed my name is Copper and that is mostly what everyone including my mom Michelle calls me ... well, except when I'm in trouble ... then my name is Copper Prouty with an emphasis on EVERY syllable. Sometimes I even pay attention.

So just the other morning mom was so excited because she said a big truck was coming with lots and lots of trees and shrubs just in time for the fall planting season.

Well, the truck showed up early ... like really early ... just after that darned rooster greeted the dawn with his "Cock-a-doodle-do" screech. And when mom's son Connor and her partner Chris went barreling out the porch door to help the truck driver back in, I went right along with them.

Did I mention that I love to run? I may be a short fur ball, but I am fast when I want to be. I didn't even bark at the rooster as I passed the chicken coop.

What happened next? "COPP –ER PROU-TY!!!"

Should I stop???



What's New



Trees and shrubs have been arriving at the garden center by the hundreds over the last several week. CCG has beautiful plants to enhance every landscape and for every type of condition. We are especially proud of our extensive camellia selection; the largest in the region.

We recently received several shipments of stunning house-plants currently displayed throughout our green-houses. We have beginner plants, pet-friendly plants and much more.



Our adorable gift shop is chock full of unique garden-themed beauties. We also have gorgeous ribbon and the expertise to help you create stunning decorations or centerpieces for your holiday table.



Upcoming Events

SCARECROWS IN THE GARDEN
CORNER COPIA GARDENS, LLC

SCARECROWS WILL BE ON DISPLAY
Oct. 15th-31st

Participants can register in store!
Winners will be announced on Social Media!
more info at cornercopiagardens.com



LIVE 11 OCT 6-10PM



FREERADICALS BAND **MUSIC**

FREE ENTRY

Corner Copia Gardens
13477 AL-181, Fairhope, AL

The Shrimp Box Food Truck

LIVE 18 OCT 7-9PM



JESSE TAYLOR PERRY **MUSIC**

FREE ENTRY

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