

Lawn:

- Use herbicide to control broadleaf weeds.
- Rake leaves, and compost or shred with mower. Large leaves left on the lawn will mat and smother grass.

Houseplants:

- Reduce water and fertilizer as growth slows for the winter.
- Pot spring bulbs for bloom in January and February.

November

- Continue to water new plants until ground freezes.
- Clean, repair, oil, and store tools and garden hoses.
- Store fertilizers and pesticides securely. Keep liquids from freezing and protect powders from moisture.
- Periodically check on stored produce for decay. Maintain adequate moisture in stored potted bulbs being forced.

Flowers:

- Finish planting spring bulbs.
- Mulch perennials and cover roses after ground freezes.

Trees and Shrubs:

- Wrap trunks of young trees to protect from sunscald.
- Install animal barriers.

Vegetables and Fruits:

- Mulch strawberries and fall-planted garlic after ground freezes.

Lawn:

- Keep removing fallen leaves.

Houseplants:

- Monitor for water and watch for insects.

For more information on gardening please visit:

<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/state/hort.html>

or

call University of Illinois Extension
Knox County Office
309-342-5108

Other information brochures can be found online at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/hkmw/hort.html>

Developed and Written by
Knox County Master Gardeners
University of Illinois Extension
September 2012



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Garden Tips

Knox County



Fall Activities in the Garden



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While many people this time of year are ready to be done with the garden, a little extra work now will make the garden look better all winter and give you a head start in the spring. Plus, it gives you an excuse to get out and enjoy those glorious fall days.

Timing can be tricky. Some tasks, performed too early, are inefficient or not in the best interest of the plant. While it's tempting to try to get everything done while the weather is still warm and pleasant, some things just can't be hurried. Waiting too late can result in damage to plants or working in unpleasant weather.

Weather can definitely make it difficult to do things at the ideal time. Pleasant weather in early fall can be followed by weeks of rain and then sudden freezing temperatures. It's difficult to give an exact timetable for fall tasks. Temperatures and rainfall can vary widely from year to year. A killing frost can occur in late September one year, and not until November the next. If the ground is not frozen in November, some activities will have to wait until December or later.

The following is a general guide to various tasks in the fall garden. It's important to pay attention to the weather as well as to how the season in general is progressing and the conditions of your specific site.

September

- Begin clean-up as plants decline or die. Start a compost pile or add to an existing one. Do not compost diseased or insect-infested material.
- Evaluate the garden and begin to make plans for next year. Take pictures, note successes and challenges, as well as new ideas.
- Watch for and be prepared to protect plants from early frost.
- Remove annual weeds before they go to seed.
- Provide food and water for migrating birds.

Flowers:

- Purchase spring-flowering bulbs.
- Plant cold-hardy flowers such as flowering cabbage and kale, pansies, and mums in beds and containers to replace fading annuals.
- Plant new perennials. Divide or move spring and early-summer flowering perennials.
- Mark or map perennials (especially late-emerging ones) so you'll know where they are next spring.

Trees and Shrubs:

- Plant trees and shrubs. Mulch and, if necessary, keep well watered until ground freezes.
- Stop fertilizing and avoid severe pruning to allow the plants to harden off before winter.

Vegetables and Fruits:

- Continue harvesting, and share or preserve extra.
- Take cuttings, start seeds, or dig and repot plants for an indoor winter herb garden.
- Plant radishes, lettuce, spinach, and other fast-maturing cool-weather crops.

Lawn:

- Seed, sod, or renew lawns.
- Apply fertilizer.

Houseplants:

- Begin gradually bringing in houseplants kept outside for the summer. Inspect for insects, and treat if necessary.
- Begin conditioning holiday plants for bloom at the desired time.
- Pot spring bulbs for indoor bloom in late November or December (forcing).

October

- Continue clean-up.
- Keep watering plants if weather is dry.
- Prepare new beds for next year.
- Keep frost protection handy.
- Winterize water gardens.
- Collect dried pods, grasses, and other material for fall and winter decorations.

Flowers:

- Plant spring-flowering bulbs.
- Bring in geraniums, begonias, caladiums, and other tender plants before frost.
- Dig, cure, and store dahlias, cannas, and gladiolas after first frost.
- Whether or not to cut back perennials in fall or wait until spring is often a personal choice. In general, there is no harm in leaving them until spring. You might want to cut back extremely tall plants somewhat to prevent wind damage. There are many advantages to leaving the plants - they provide winter interest and food for birds, help hold mulch in place, and some perennials such as mums and salvia over-winter better if not cut back.

Trees and Shrubs:

- Continue planting. Keep watered.
- Deep-water evergreens before ground freezes.

Vegetables and Fruits:

- Add compost or other organic matter and till garden after harvest is finished. Plant cover crop.
- Plant garlic.
- Move tender herbs such as rosemary and bay indoors.
- Brussels sprouts and root crops are sweeter when harvested after a frost.