Date: October 27, 2011

Garden Checklist for November

By Kitty Angell, Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardener

Will we have another extra cold winter this year? Prepare for a freeze by watering plants well; dry roots are damaged by cold temperatures, and moist soil holds more heat than dry soil. A couple days in advance of the frigid temperatures, as soon as we get a freeze forecast, is the time to water thoroughly.

Mulching plants with bark or shredded leaves also helps protect them during the cold weather. Frost blankets, or even row cover, can be used to give plants some frost protection. Be sure the cover goes all the way to the ground and is held down with rocks or bricks; it is the heat from the ground captured under the cover that keeps the plant a bit warmer.

Preconditioning prepares the plant to withstand cold temperatures without damage. Withhold pruning and nitrogen fertilizers until spring. Fertilizers high in potassium (the third number on a fertilizer package), such as green sand can be applied now, as this nutrient is known to promote thick cell walls.

Take plumerias inside the garage and withhold water until growth appears next spring. Take cuttings now and let cure over the winter before planting next spring. Protect tropical plants that will not withstand freezing temperatures. Inspect them for insect pests before bringing them indoors.

If we remain in a drought, don’t forget to give your landscape some water, through irrigation or by hand. They won’t need water nearly as frequently or in as great an amount as when the weather is hot, but the soil around plants shouldn’t be allowed to get bone dry during the cold weather.

Early November is a great time to plant or move shrubs and trees. Roots continue to develop during late fall and the plants will be well established before bud break in spring. Smaller shrubs are easier to transplant. Water well with a seaweed solution until established. Small trees can be treated in the same manner, but transplant them around the first of January. Palms are an exception to this-wait until spring to transplant them. Don’t be in a hurry to prune woody plants, February is usually the best time to prune them.

Set out cool-season bedding plants such as pansies, violas, stock, dianthus, and snapdragons. Also, start planning for your spring flowering season with a mixture of annuals and perennials. Spring-blooming plants such as daylilies should be divided now. Spring bulbs can be planted anytime in December as long as they have been refrigerated for at least 60 days.

November is a great month for planting herbs. Interplant them among other perennials and vegetables or dedicate a special garden for herbs. Incorporate a few extra plants of parsley, dill or fennel for larvae of the swallowtail butterflies. These plants will also attract beneficial insects to the garden. Most herbs need well-drained soil and full sun to give their best performance.

This is a good month to place orders for seeds. Besides having them available when you are ready to plant, by ordering early you will be certain to get the varieties you want. Try to order a few new kinds each year to expand your garden content.

Vegetables to plant in November include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and kohlrabi plants – get these in by November 15. Carrots, Swiss chard, collards, garlic, lettuce, mustard, multiplying onion, radish, spinach and turnip can also be planted. Remember to plant kale, even the ornamental kale is edible! Water the seed trays with fish emulsion to discourage the fungal disease of young seedlings called “damping off.” And let them dry out just a bit between waterings-they should be moist but not soggy. Put in strawberry plants this month for a great spring harvest. Strawberries are perennial plants in cooler regions, but are treated as annuals here.

Look through garden books and catalogs for new plants to try next year. Resolve to plant more native species that require less water. Strive to have at least 50% of your landscape be native plants.

*This information is provided by Texas AgriLife Extension-Aransas County. Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating*

*Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Aransas County can be reached by phone at 361 790-0103 or by email at* [*aransas-tx@tamu.edu*](https://webmail.indstate.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=7412dd19e8a24f82841661ec33758173&URL=mailto%3aaransas-tx%40tamu.edu) *and is located at 611 E. Mimosa, Rockport, TX.*

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