

Gardening in October

Plant

There is still time to plant carrots, garlic, leaf lettuce, radishes, spinach and turnips, but get the seeds into the ground during the first week in October. Fall Asters are a beautiful addition to a fall garden, however, they will die back at the first frost. Cool season grasses such as Ryegrass and Fescue can be planted now for a temporary winter cover. Perennial rye is easier to take care of than annual rye. Planting trees and shrubs at this time gives them several months to get root systems established. Early October is a good time to dig and divide spring perennials such as phlox, daylilies, iris, Shasta daisies, coneflowers, gloriosa daisies, hardy amaryllis and hostas. Bulbs that require chilling for 45 days can be put in the refrigerator and planted in December. Plant winter annuals such as pansies. Fertilize with a high nitrogen soluble fertilizer to help them get established.

Prune

Remove damaged limbs from trees and shrubs. Wait until February to do major shape-up work on shrubs. Continue mowing lawns until the first frost stops growth. Do not mow a lawn over-seeded with ryegrass or fescue until you can see the blades coming up. Mowing sooner can suck up the seeds. Prune old flowers off of late-blooming plants to keep them looking attractive.

Fertilize

If you haven't done so already, fertilize warm season lawns the first week of this month. Feed fescue and ryegrass with high-nitrogen fertilizer the middle of the month.

Watch for

Early season frost. On calm clear nights frost can form on leaves at temperatures in the high 30's. Keep frost cover handy to protect plants. Bring tender potted plants in at night. October can be a dry month so check your soil and water when needed.

Garden Tip

Remember those rainy, icy, snowy days last March that made it impossible to do any work in the yard, but that the weeds loved? Continue to pull or cut weeds, preferably before they go to seed. Remember -- one year of seed, 7 years of weed. Now is the time to clean dead vegetation out of flower beds and garden beds; apply a 1" layer of compost to the beds and mulch for the winter.

Check patio plants carefully for pests before bringing them in for the winter. Set pots in a tub of water for a few minutes to get rid of fire ants.

While the weather is still good, prepare the place you plan to plant English peas now so it will be ready in late January/early February.

For gardening questions call 903-583-5473 or email questions to fanninmastergardener@gmail.com

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