

September in the Garden

Planting

Garden Centers offer spring-flowering bulbs this month. Choose your favorites as well as trying some new ones.

Plant spring-flowering bulbs. The rule of thumb is to plant bulbs 2½ times as deep as they are wide. Include bulb fertilizer and bone meal in the holes. Plant early, mid and late season bulbs for a continuous show in the spring.

You can plant and transplant trees and shrubs once the weather cools.

Dig and divide many of the perennial herbs and flowers. Check with local Extension Master Gardeners on which plants can be divided and how to divide.

Plant garlic bulbs - 5"-6" deep, 8" apart.

Garden and Plant Maintenance

To protect tender plants from the damage of early frost and extend the harvest for your vegetable garden, cover beds with burlap, boxes, blankets or even layers of newspaper.

Now is the time to clear up plant debris from the yard and garden. Don't put diseased plants in the compost.

Before frost, dig up begonias and canna and pack them away for the winter in a box. Cover with sand, sawdust or perlite. Check them once a month to make sure they are not drying out too much. Water lightly if necessary.

Harvest winter squashes when their rinds are hard and resist puncturing with a fingernail and when the vines start to wither.

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Garden and Plant Maintenance...

Put a layer of compost and manure onto the garden beds. They will break down over the winter, providing nutrients for next year's planting.

Prune vines and shrubs to allow air to flow freely through them in winter.

Tomatoes don't need the sun to ripen. Bring in green tomatoes if they have lost their bright green color. They will ripen to red on an indoor windowsill or make fried green tomatoes!

Lawn and Garden

The first two weeks of this month are an excellent time to put in a new lawn. Cool weather with periodic rainfall is ideal for grass seeds to germinate and become established. Choose seed mixtures that are suited for your location. Bluegrass varieties work well in sunny areas and fescue works well in shady areas.

This is a good time to core aerate existing lawns to keep them vigorous.

Green firewood can harbor beetles that pose a threat to garden trees. Eliminate beetles by piling wood into stacks no larger than 4'x4'x4'. Cover with a clear plastic sheet, bury the edges and tape the seams; sunlight will cook the beetles within a few weeks.

Yellow Jackets are at their height of activity. Keep traps emptied and rebated, working only after these pests have retired for the evening.

To save rosemary and thyme you use for cooking, pot them in a suitable container, place them in a sunny area in your kitchen and use them through the winter.