

Orange County Master Gardeners

November Garden Tips and Tasks

By Diane Gipson

Season: Autumn (overall) is the best time to plant (ground cover, shrubs, perennials, trees, spring blooming perennials, bulbs and cool-season annuals)

November heralds return of rainy season. It is a busy month for gardeners in Southern California. Fall planting season is coming to close.

Important tip - A good principle to remember:

Prune spring-blooming shrubs in summer

Prune summer-blooming shrubs in fall

Prune winter-flowering shrubs in spring

Plant: (natives, lawns, perennials, winter vegetables, fall coloring plants & bulbs)

- **Cool season annuals:** African daisy, Iceland poppy, lobelia, ornamental cabbage, snapdragon and stock, pansies.
- **Long-term color:** plumbago, Mexican sage, sasanqua camellias, Tagetes lemmonii and other late-blooming shrubs. Also trees (liquidamber, Chinese Pistache, ginko biloba) and shrubs with colorful fruit: heavenly bamboo, holly, persimmon, pomegranate, pyracantha and toyon.
- **Bulbs:** prechilled tulip & hyacinth (add superphosphate as you plant)
- **Wildflowers:** broadcast seeds over sunny weed-free area; tamp down and keep moist
- **Spring-blooming bulbs**
- **California natives:** manzanita, toyon, ceanothus, coffeeberry
- **Lawn grasses:** fescue and rye
- **Winter (cool season) vegetables:** seeds of beets, carrots, chard, onion, parsley, peas, radishes, turnips. Set out broccoli, cabbage, onion sets, cauliflower seedlings. Garlic, shallots, fava beans, leeks, bare-root artichokes, bare-root strawberries, flowering kale
- **Herbs**
- **Cover crops** to add organic matter to soil during winter

Maintenance (Trim, prune, mow, divide, weed):

- **Control weeds** – pull bluegrass, chickweed, sow thistle, other young weeds
- Dig up **dahlias**, trim off remaining foliage, brush off soil, allow bulbs to dry out in sun. Store in peat, perlite, sand or vermiculite until spring
- **Prune berry canes** –cut back old canes of blackberry, boysenberry and loganberry to the ground. Leave new smooth-barked canes to bear fruit. (Wait until Dec or Jan to cut back low-chill raspberries.
- **Tend mums** – support still-blooming plants with stakes and ties. After bloom, cut back, leaving 6” stems. Lift and divide old clumps; cut roots apart, discard wood centers.
- **Prune:** trees before Santa Ana winds return & summer-blooming shrubs, acacias. Prune pine trees and other conifers now through Feb.
- **Trim:** brown top growth on dormant perennials

- **Mow and mulch lawns**
- **Rake leaves, clean up under fruit trees**
- If you had **peach or nectarine leaf curl** this year, spray with lime sulfur or fixed copper at full leaf fall, using copper spray with 50% fixed copper
- **Cover** spinach and lettuce with floating row covers to protect from frost
- **Spread compost** around citrus trees to encourage spring growth/blossoming
- **Divide and plant** matilija poppy and agapanthus
- **Transplant shrubs & young trees** that are growing in wrong places

Fertilize:

- Feed **winter annuals & winter vegetables**
- Fertilize **lawns**: even dormant grasses store energy for following spring if fed in fall. Weeds are dormant but lawn is still growing, even if slowly. Fertilizing now lays down deep roots for growth later. Look for slow-release complete lawn fertilizer high in nitrogen

Water: (see that garden receives at least 1” water a week)

- Lawns, ornamental, vegetables
- Potted plants twice a week
- Look out for dry spots in garden, even though things look dormant, they shouldn't get dehydrated. Cold plus drought can be deadly especially in winds.

Pest Control:

- Protect cabbage crops from cabbage whites – cover young seedlings with floating row covers after planting or spray with bacillus thuringiensis to kill larvae
- **Snails & slugs**: get more active now and during wet season. Bait, hand-pick or squirt ones you can't reach with a solution: ½ household ammonia to ½ water

Lawn care

Cool-season lawns (ryegrass, bluegrass & fescue) thrive under cool skies

- plant new fescue lawns from seed or sod
- use annual rye to over-seed browned out summer lawns

Warm-season lawns (Bermuda, zoysia & St. Augustine) are dormant in winter

Harvest

- Figs: try fig jam. (Black Mission and Brown Turkey are good choices all over state. For white flesh try Genoa at coast and Kadota inland.)
- Brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, carrots, turnips, collards and kale after frost sweetens their flavor.

Bibliography

52 Weeks in the California Garden by Robert Smaus

Pat Welsh's Southern California Gardening, A Month by Month Guide by Pat Welsh

OCRegister.com, Home and Garden Guides

Sunset.com, Southern California – What to do in your garden in November