

Bluestem Breezes
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October 5, 2015

October Gardening Calendar

I believe I'm overdue on sharing a gardening calendar. The Johnson County Extension Horticulture Agent provides a calendar for every month of the year. Personally, I really like to look these over every now and again to double check I haven't completely missed the boat on something.

As we are wrapping up the growing season, take a look at this checklist to make sure every part of your landscape is bundled up for the upcoming winter!

Vegetables and Fruits

- Plant garlic cloves for next summer's harvest. Fall planting gets a jump on spring conditions.
- After a light frost, dig sweet potatoes and cure them for two weeks in a warm location. Then store in a cool, dry location for longer keeping.
- Pick pumpkins and winter squash. Keep in a warm area for a couple of weeks, and then store in a cool, dry location.
- Till the garden at the end of the season and add organic matter such as manure or compost to improve the soil structure.
- Make notes of successes and failures in the garden for next year.
- Remove hulls from black walnuts to retain good color of the kernels.
- Continue to harvest apples.
- Pick up and discard fallen fruit to reduce disease next year.

Flowers

- Plant spring flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, and crocus, for a splash of early season color.
- Remove dead annuals from the garden.
- Trim perennial stalks to tidy the garden for winter.
- Pot bulbs for indoor forcing.
- Clean up dead iris and peony foliage and destroy it to decrease the spread of disease.
- After a light frost, dig canna, glads, dahlias and other tender bulbs for winter storage.
- Make notes about the garden to document successes and failures.

Lawns

- Continue to mow the lawn if necessary, bluegrass 2 inches, tall fescue 2½ inches.
- Core aerate turf to reduce soil compaction, improve drainage, break up thatch, and help nutrients move into the soil.
- Control dandelions, henbit, and chickweed with a broadleaf herbicide while seedlings are young.
- Sharpen mower blade for a clean cut.
- Check oil level in your lawn mower.
- Keep fallen leaves removed from the lawn to prevent shading and dieback on grass.

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant new trees and shrubs and keep them watered during dry winter months.
- Once the leaves have fallen, transplant trees and shrubs.
- Trim dead, broken, or diseased branches from trees and shrubs.
- Enjoy fall leaf color, which normally hits its peak about the third week of October.

Miscellaneous

- Drain and store garden hoses and sprinklers for winter.

- Prepare the compost pile for winter. Add new materials and turn.
- Store unused seeds in a cool, dry location.

For additional information, visit the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; kamayer@ksu.edu; 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out wabaunsee.ksu.edu.