

Garden Club Horticultural Hints November, 2019

Where did the year go?!

For bulbs, it's now or never. Early November is your last call to get spring blooming bulbs in the ground. As a general rule, bulbs are planted three times as deep as their largest dimension (measured from the top of the bulb). Add lime on top of the soil to confound squirrels, chipmunks and others who would dig the bulbs for dinner. The lime also acts to sweeten our generally acidic soil which bulbs prefer. And take photos of the planting areas so you know what you put where your bulbs next spring.



Take photos as you plant new bulbs. It will help you to make certain you don't plant on top of them.



Sweet scents for the holidays. Purchase bulbs now that you would like to give as Christmas gifts. Amaryllis and paperwhites are both easy to force. Paperwhites can be planted in soil or in small pebbles just deep to allow the roots to provide a sturdy base for the flowers. Planted by November 14, they should provide flowers for Christmas. Amaryllis take longer to bloom, up to 8 weeks, but also last longer once in bloom.



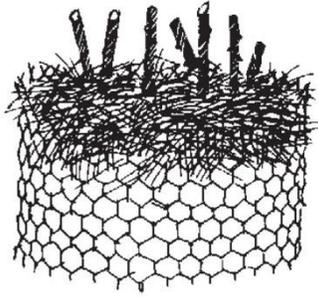
Leave some leaves. Give yourself a break on (some) fall clean up. Stripping the garden bare is not good for the soil. Some plant (clean, not diseased) material left in place helps to hold the soil. A mulch of shredded leaves (from your lawn mowing, for example) will prevent soil erosion in beds.

Some flower seeds need a winter outside to germinate. Sow seeds of calendulas, cosmos, cleomes and snapdragons outside. If you garden to attract birds and butterflies, also sow *Asclepias* (butterfly weed – shown at right) and milkweed seed now.





Let them rest. Stop fertilizing houseplants until next February – unless you keep them under lights. With late autumn and winter’s lower light levels, houseplants enter a resting phase. It will also help your houseplants if you keep your home on the cooler side (or place plants in a cooler room) and keep your houseplant’s leaves clean



Rose care. Now that your roses have blooms their last for this season, make certain they have a safe winter. Cut back long canes on roses to prevent damage from wind whipping them. Protect the remaining canes with a wire cage filled with leaves. Your roses will thank you next spring!

Thanksgiving for your garden. As you prepare for Thanksgiving and winter, remember wildlife needs a place to winter also. Dead flower stalks that have seeds (like the rudbeckia pictured at right) are natural birdfeeders, leaving them in place provides food. If you have room on your property, a brush pile gives birds shelter from both severe weather and predators.



Did you grow strawberries this year? To protect them against winter damage, cover strawberry beds with a straw, pine needles or other loose, coarse material. Do not use tree leaves which will pack down.



Clean and sharpen your tools. Most outdoor work is finished for the season so spend some time winterizing your tools. Tools left in garages or garden sheds over the winter may rust due to high humidity. Cleaning them thoroughly now and then sharpen (pruners, saws, some shovels and so forth) and lightly oil metal surfaces—they will be ready for work in the spring.