

Garden Club Horticultural Hints

September 2022

Rain! Just when we were just about to give up hope!



Do row covers really extend your season by a month or more? Two beds were planted side-by-side in mid-September. The lettuce on the left was kept watered and weeded but left uncovered. The lettuce on the right had a simple row cover supported by hoops. This is what each bed looked like in late October. thin seedlings to allow plants to grow good-sized roots.

Peas are an ideal fall crop as they grow well in cool weather. Be sure to keep them well-watered

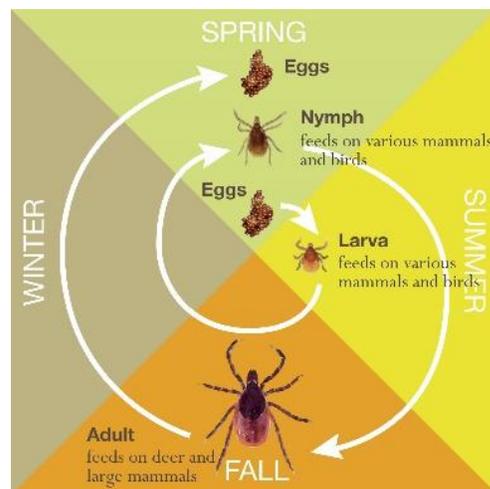


The vegetable gardening season isn't over! Want fresh greens well into autumn? Buy seeds now before they disappear. Don't dawdle over planting them; and take steps to keep the new plants from getting too much sun or heat. Water as needed as the plants grow. Seeds of greens like lettuces, spinach, Swiss chard, kale, and beet greens can be planted every week. Greens grow best when air and soil temperatures are cooler, so shield the young seedlings from sun and heat, and water regularly until temperatures begin to cool. How do you shield them? Use row cover set above the plants to keep the hottest sun off them. And water regularly so neither the small plants nor their roots dry out.

Peas. Make certain peas have time to mature before short days and cool temperatures slow their growth and fall frosts arrive. Check the days to maturity for each variety. Because young plants grow more slowly in late summer heat, add 10 days to the listed days to determine your planting date. Keep them watered and use row covers to mitigate the heat.

Root vegetables. Beet, radish, carrot and turnip seeds germinate best when the soil is cool. To improve germination, keep the newly seeded areas in shade and keep the soil consistently moist. To grow good-sized roots, give seedlings room by thinning to about 3" to 4" between each plant.

More than ever, beware of ticks. In addition to Lyme disease, it is reported that "local" ticks now also carry other serious, health-endangering pathogens. Deer ticks are known to carry Babesiosis (which kills red blood cells), Anaplasmosis and relapsing fever (cause fever, chills, severe head and muscle aches), Ehrlichiosis (attacks white blood cells), and Powassain fever (causes vomiting, loss of coordination, speech difficulties, and seizures). Testing has not shown any natural products to be effective. Instead, use established, effective skin repellents like DEET or picaridin and permethrin. Wear light colored clothing and for check for ticks after every outdoor activity. Throwing clothes into the dryer for 20 minutes will also kill any ticks you brought in with you.



And, make room for garlic. Late-September through October is a good time to plant separated garlic bulb cloves for harvest of garlic next summer. The fall weather helps garlic form roots and start sprouting before the cold treatment of winter (required for proper shoot and bulb formation). Garlic should be planted at least six weeks before the soil freezes to allow enough time for good root growth, but not enough time for leaves to emerge. Cloves should be planted 3 to 4 inches deep, oriented with the root end down.



Plant cloves 3-4 inches deep



If your lawn was healthy before the drought set in, leave it be this fall. Grass is a hardy, cool-weather perennial and it will come back with rain and cool temps.

What to do about that brown lawn. The summer heat and water bans were tough on everyone's lawns; yours likely turned brown. If your lawn was healthy before the drought, you are best off to leave your lawn be. Grass is a hardy, cool-weather perennial, and it will come back with rain and falling temperatures. Just pull crabgrass and other obvious weeds before they set seed. But, if your lawn was already in rough shape, it may be time to renovate. Renovation may be as simple as reseeding bare spots; or as comprehensive as killing all vegetation, followed by reseeding the entire area. Cooler temperatures and ample rainfall in mid-September provide favorable growing conditions for new seedlings and for grass to become established. Always get a soil test first and amend the soil before seeding, being sure to correct pH and nutrient deficiencies as recommended by the soil test results. And, if you found that you can live without a lawn, consider planting native perennials, shrubs or trees. They need less maintenance and once established, less water

Back in the house! If you gave your house plants a summer vacation on a screened porch, start bringing them in now. All houseplants should get a good cleaning before they return inside. If they weren't protected from insects and diseases, start treating them with appropriate insecticides. Then, isolate them from other plants until you are certain they aren't harboring pests or diseases that could wreak havoc on them.

Late blight is the scourge of the September garden



All houseplants should get a thorough cleaning before returning inside; and be isolated until you're certain they're pest-free.

Late blight makes its ugly presence known in gardens in September. Tomato and potato plants infected with blight need to be bagged and sent to the trash. This includes fruit that fell from the vine before ripening as well as dead leaves. As a rule, it is much better to be safe by sending any plant material from your garden that is insect- or disease-infected to the dump or transfer station rather than the compost heap.

Written and created by Betty Sanders. For more horticultural suggestions for September and throughout the year, please visit www.BettyOnGardening.com