

News Article

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October Lawn and Garden Activities

The following lawn, landscape and garden suggestions for the month of October are from “Autumn Garden Calendar,” Purdue Extension publication HO-93-W, authored by B. Rosie Lerner. Timing horticultural events and practices can vary from year to year, depending on weather conditions. The following information is intended as a general guide. Adjust activities according to local weather and site conditions, and be sure to read and follow label directions thoroughly on all products.

Indoor Plants and Activities

- Pot-up spring-flowering bulbs with tips exposed, to force into bloom indoors. Moisten soil and refrigerate 10 to 13 weeks. Transfer to a cool, sunny location, and allow an additional three to four weeks for blooming.
- Water indoor plants less frequently, and discontinue fertilizer as plants slow down or stop growing for the winter season.

Woody Ornamental Landscape Plants and Tree Fruits

- Keep plants, especially newly planted stock, well-watered until the ground freezes.
- Have soil ready for mounding roses for winter protection. Do not mound or cover the roses until after leaves drop and soil is near freezing, usually in late November or early December.

Lawns

- Early fall is a good time to apply broadleaf weed killers. Be sure to follow all label directions, and choose a calm day to prevent spray drift.
- Rake the fallen leaves from lawn, particularly larger-sized leaves, such as maple and sycamore leaves; they can smother the lawn as they become wet and mat down. Raking of smaller leaves, such as honeylocust, is optional.

Flowers, Vegetables, and Small fruits

- Harvest root crops and store in a cold (32°F), humid location. Storing produce in perforated plastic bags is a convenient and easy way to increase humidity.
- Harvest brussels sprouts as they develop in the axils of the leaves from the bottom of the stem. Brussels sprouts will continue to develop up the stem.

- Harvest pumpkins and winter squash when rind is hard and fully colored but before frost. Store in a cool location until ready to use.
- Harvest gourds when stems begin to brown and dry. Cure at 70 to 80°F for two to four weeks.
- Asparagus top growth should not be removed until foliage yellows. Let foliage stand over the winter to collect snow for insulation and moisture.
- Remove plant debris from the garden to protect next year's planting from insect and disease build-up. Compost plant refuse by alternating layers of soil, plant material, and manure or commercial fertilizer.
- Carve a Halloween jack-o'-lantern.
- Complete planting of spring-flowering bulbs.
- Strawberry plants need protection from winter's extremes, but applying winter mulch too early may cause crowns to rot. Wait until later in November.