



## Garden Tips for November 2015

by Thea Fiskin, UC Master Gardener

While in most parts of the country garden chores have stopped, here in the San Joaquin Valley we are lucky enough to garden all year--no Winter Holiday breaks for us! Our first frost usually strikes around the middle of November, so get your planting done soon.

**BULBS:** It's time to plant spring bulbs for spring color. Add a handful of bulb fertilizer to the base of planting holes, mixing it in the soil. Usually the pointed end of the bulb is placed up when planting. The larger the bulb, the deeper you plant it is a general rule. In most cases you should plant the bulb three times deeper than its height. Spring bulbs like sun, so choose a site where they will get a full day of sunshine. Try to finish planting early in the month.

- Anemones are little wrinkly tubers that resemble raisins. Soak in water for a couple hours before planting 4-5" deep.
- Daffodils are planted about 8" deep, unless they are miniatures, and then they should be planted 4" deep. They will multiply every year and are gopher proof.
- Grape Hyacinths have lovely blue, purple, or white blooms. The bulbs will multiply every year. Plant about 4-6" deep.
- Hyacinth bulbs must be pre-cooled; otherwise, they will have short stems and smaller flowers. Plant 6-8" deep. These are treated as annuals--pulled out and discarded after bloom.
- Ranunculus tubers look like dried, miniature bunches of bananas. Soak tubers in water for a couple hours before planting. Place in the hole with the pointed ends down about 2" deep.
- Tulips are another bulb that needs to be pre-cooled to get the best results. Plant 6-10" deep. Tulips are also treated as annuals--pulled out and discarded after bloom.



**PLANT:** There is still time to plant native plants, shrubs, trees and winter vegetables. Try to finish planting while the soil is still warm.

If you want to move some of your established plants to another garden spot, it's best to transplant shrubs, trees, and perennials when they go dormant or drop their leaves. Dig them up carefully, taking as much of the root system as you can. By doing it now, there will be less transplant shock, and they will be ready to grow in the springtime.

**PRUNE:** After the leaves fall, begin pruning shrubs and trees to shape and to prevent storm damage. A tree with no gaps in the leaf canopy may break branches in the wind; open up spaces by removing a few branches to the trunk with thinning cuts. Never top landscape trees.

Complete fall clean up and cut back perennials that have become too leggy or will be damaged in the frost.

**FERTILIZE:** Fall and winter blooming plants can be fertilized now, as well as winter vegetables. Do not fertilize avocado, citrus, palms or any other frost sensitive plants.

**DISEASE PREVENTION:** If your peach or nectarine tree had deformed leaves this last summer, it probably had "peach leaf curl." This is a fungal disease that affects fruiting and can kill the tree if severe enough. To control the disease:

- Rake leaves when they fall. Remove any fruit mummies and discard. Do not add these to your compost pile.
- Spray trunk, branches, and ground underneath the tree with a copper-based fungicide or a Bordeaux mixture (a slurry made of hydrated lime and copper sulfate) or a synthetic fungicide. Products need 50 percent copper to be truly effective.
- One application is usually sufficient; however, if we have a very wet winter, then spray again before the buds swell in the spring.

**PEST CONTROL:** Keep pulling weeds. Watch for snails and slugs.

**FROST PROTECTION:** Protect tender plants by bringing them into your house, onto the patio, or under house eaves. Do not fertilize or overwater so plants can "harden up" (become tougher) and have no new growth--which is very susceptible to frost damage. Wrap trunks of avocados, citrus, kiwi and palms with heavy paper or burlap (not plastic) if heavy frost is forecasted.

**WATER WISELY:** Monitor rainfall and only water as needed. Cooler temperatures and shorter days mean you may only need to water once a week this month, if at all. Hopefully, this will be a well-deserved wet winter for California.

Happy Thanksgiving!

October 31, 2015