



Helpful Garden Tips for November 2016

by Thea Fiskin, UC Master Gardener

We usually experience the first frost in our gardens in the middle of November. For this reason, it is important to finish up your gardening projects at the beginning of the month. Move all of the frost tender plants into the house, onto the patio, or under the eaves.

BULBS: November is the most ideal month for planting your spring bulbs. Nurseries usually have a large number of bulbs available. Purchase only the bulbs that are firm and do not show any signs of mold. Certain bulbs, such as Tulips or Hyacinths, will require pre-cooling for 6 weeks before they are planted. A good way to pre-cool is to place them in the refrigerator. I use the vegetable/fruit drawer, but make sure there isn't any fruit near the bulbs. Fruits and vegetables can cause the bulbs to sprout prematurely.

Plant your bulbs where they will get a full day of sunshine. A general rule to follow when planting is to place the larger bulbs deeper. In most cases, you should plant the bulb three times deeper than its height. Usually the pointed end of the bulb is placed up when planting. Add a handful of bulb fertilizer to the base of the planting holes, and mix it into the soil. All spring bulbs should be planted by Thanksgiving at the very latest.

- Anenomes have little wrinkly tubers that resemble raisins. Soak the tubers in water for a couple of hours before you plant them 4-5" deep.
- Daffodils are planted about 8" deep, unless they are miniatures. Miniatures should be planted 4" deep. Daffodils will multiply every year, so don't plant them too close together. If you have a gopher problem, these are the bulbs to plant.
- Grape Hyacinths have lovely blue, purple or white blooms. These bulbs will also multiply every year. Plant about 4-6" deep.
- Hyacinth bulbs must be pre-cooled; otherwise they will have short stubby stems and smaller flowers. These are treated as annuals and are pulled out and discarded after their bloom time.
- Ranunculus tubers look like dried miniature bunches of bananas. Soak the tubers in water for a couple of hours before planting. Place in the hole with the little pointy ends down, approximately 2" deep.
- Tulips are another bulb that requires pre-cooling in order to achieve the best results. Plant 6"-8" deep. Tulips are also treated as annuals in our area, as they rarely survive the summer. Pull out and discard them after they have bloomed.



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

If you want to move some of your established plants to another spot in the garden, you should wait until the end of the month. It is best to transplant shrubs, trees and perennials when they go dormant or drop their leaves. Dig them up carefully, and take as much of the root system as you can. Be sure to plant at the same ground level, and water well. If you plant them too deep, it will kill the plant. By doing it now, there will be less transplant shock, and the winter will give them time to spend their energy growing a strong root system, which will give them more growing reserves for the spring.

PRUNE: After the leaves fall, begin pruning shrubs and trees, not only to shape them, but to prevent storm damage. A tree without gaps in the leaf canopy may have broken branches as a result of the wind. Open up spaces by removing a few branches from the trunk with thinning cuts. You should never top landscape trees. Complete your fall cleanup by cutting back perennials that have become too leggy, or they will be damaged by the frost.

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

DISEASE PREVENTION: If your peach or nectarine tree had deformed leaves during the summer, it probably had "peach leaf curl". This is a fungal disease that affects fruiting, and if severe, it can cause the tree to die. To control peach leaf curl:

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

FROST PROTECTION: Wrap trunks of avocados, citrus, kiwi and palms with heavy paper or burlap (not plastic) if a heavy frost is in the forecast.

WATER WISELY: Reduce watering due to cooler temperatures and shorter days. You may only need to water once a week, if at all. It is important that you follow your city's water regulations.

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