



## Garden Tips for September 2017

By Peyton Ellas, UCCE Master Gardener

What changes in September? Days are still warm, but cooler, and night time temperatures are more reliably cooler. Even with possible heat waves, day lengths are less, so the overall effect is a cool down, and the feeling in the air of autumn. September is the perfect month to begin landscape projects. Towards the end of the month, we may even be able to begin planting. At the same time, temperatures are still warm enough for heat loving plants to thrive, and to get in a last harvest of short season summer vegetables, and to finish solarization projects. Here are some of the things to pay attention to this month:

**WATER WISELY:** If you haven't done so recently, check your irrigation timer and sprinkler/emitter heads to make sure there are no problems. Continue to deep water trees and large shrubs until we get rain. Hose off dust and cobwebs from your plants once or twice, but always use a hose shut-off and don't use the hose to wash down sidewalks and driveways.

**PLANT:** Almost all plants thrive when planted in the fall instead of the spring. Trees, shrubs, perennials, and especially CA-native and Mediterranean-climate plants can be planted now. Citrus and other frost-sensitive subtropical plants are an exception; those are best planted in the spring.

Examples of climate-right, water-conserving plants that work in most soils include Cleveland sage, artemesia, yarrow, California fuchsia, rosemary, rockrose, autumn and summer sage, deer grass, hedge (French) lavender, and many other sage varieties.

If we get early rains, go ahead and start sowing wildflower seeds. Otherwise, wait until next month. Good seeds to try include California poppy, elegant Clarkia, desert blue bells, and gold fields.

Herbs that can be planted are catnip, chamomile, chives, cilantro, dill, Echinacea, fennel, lavender, mint (in a container only), parsley, rosemary, tarragon and thyme.

**VEGETABLES:** It's time to change the vegetable garden to winter veggies. Cool-season veggies that can be planted from seed are beets, carrots, lettuce, radishes, and sugar snap peas. Transplant seedlings of artichokes, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, kale, lettuce and strawberries. It's also time to plant garlic. Break apart garlic bulbs into individual cloves, leaving on the paper husks, and making sure the pointed end is up when planting. You can also plant potatoes and onions when starts become available in local feed stores and independent nurseries.



**BULBS:** Time to start choosing bulbs for the garden. Shop early for the best selection, but don't plant yet; it's too warm. Store in a cool, dry, dark location until planting begins in November. When choosing bulbs, the rule is "generally the larger the bulb, the larger the flower." Tulip and

Hyacinth bulbs need to be cooled in the refrigerator for six to eight weeks before planting, and must be kept away from apples to keep bulbs from sprouting prematurely.

**MAINTENANCE:** Divide crowded herbaceous perennials like Coreopsis, yarrow and society garlic. Dig up clumps with a spading fork or shovel, discard any dead parts, then divide into sections, and replant. Share leftover sections with friends. Harvest home-made or use purchased compost and dig lightly into the bed before replanting perennials. Water deeply, and don't forget the two-to-four-inch layer of mulch.

Continue to dead-head your rose and butterfly bushes. You can begin to do your annual trimming of many spring-flowering native shrubs and perennials like Cleveland sage, bush lupine, Carpenteria, penstemon, and hummingbird sage. Trim off old flowers and up to half of the greenery before January to keep them tidy, compact and ensure good flowering next year.

**WEEDS:** Now is the time to apply a preemergent herbicide to prevent annual blue grass and other winter weed seeds from germinating. Remember not to use a preemergent where you have spread seed for wildflowers or vegetables. Continue to remove warm season weeds before they set seed.

On the first cool morning of the season, try to get out and enjoy your garden. It's good for your body and spirit



August 26, 2017