# MONTHLY GARDENING CHORES--OCTOBER

#### By Linda Lewis Griffith

**Planting:**

* Prune oleanders now before next season’s flower buds have formed.
* Plant cool season annuals, such as African daisy, foxglove, Iceland poppy, larkspur, lobelia, pansy, petunia, phlox, snapdragon, stock, sweet alyssum, sweet pea and viola. Keep them well watered, especially if temperatures climb.
* Feed and water roses, but don’t prune yet.
* Plant warm climate bulbs for early blooms. Consider those from South Africa, such as ixia, Ornithogalum, Sparaxis and tritonia.
* Pre-chill cool climate bulbs before planting. Daffodils, crocus, hyacinth and tulips are good choices.
* Sow cool season vegetables: lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, onions and spinach.
* Feed azaleas, camellias, hydrangeas and rhododendrons with high-acid fertilizer.

**Managing water:**

* Find water requirements for potential new plants at the [Waterwonk website](http://waterwonk.us/). Learn how much water plants need and whether a specific plant is right for your garden.
* Maintain a 3” layer of mulch on all bedding plants to keep soil cool, retain moisture and control weeds. When applying mulch near trees and woody shrubs keep at least 6” away from the trunk.
* Adjust irrigation. In spite of warm temperatures, evapotranspiration (ET) has plummeted, so watering time can be reduced by 25 over last month’s use. Shorter days – fewer hours of sunlight – has a significant effect on ET.

**Pests:**

* Continue controlling [pocket gophers](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7433.html) and [ground squirrels](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7438.html). Gophers are active all year round and are best managed with a combination of traps and additional fumigation. During the fall, ground squirrels are foraging and storing seeds in their burrows. Trapping is an effective method for controlling them now.
* [Citrus leafminer](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74137.html) is common on citrus. Trees can generally tolerate damage. But avoid fertilizing or pruning citrus trees as that promotes new growth which attracts leafminers.
* [Wooly whiteflies](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/r107300711.html) are also common on citrus and encourage the growth of sooty mold. Their presence is often indicated by an infestation of ants which feed on the honeydew excreted by both nymphs and adults. An application of [Tanglefoot](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/ANTKEY/trees.html) around the trunk of affected trees controls the ants and minimizes problems with whiteflies.

**Resources:**

* Pocket gophers: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7433.html>
* Ground squirrels: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7438.html>
* Pocket Gophers and ground squirrels: <http://www.sacvalleyorchards.com/almonds/vertebrates/pocket-gopher-and-ground-squirrel-management/>
* Citrus leafminer: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74137.html>
* Wooly whiteflies: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/r107300711.html>
* Tanglefoot: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7411.html>