



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Helpful Garden Tips for November 2019 (November 2, 2019)

by Peyton Ellas, UCCE Master Gardeners

November is a month of harvest and holiday thoughts. Has your garden exceeded your expectations this year? Is it a place you want to visit? What can you make from gifts of the garden like pomegranates, miniature pumpkins, gourds, fall flowers, herbs, vegetables for hearty feasts and light salads or snacks? Are the moths, butterflies, migrating birds, bees and other insects active during the few warm days left? I love to sit out in the garden in November, bundled up usually with jacket and cap and gloves and a cup of hot tea or coffee. The colors may be subtle or bold, but always beautiful. and the action a mix of late-pollinator activity and falling leaves. What about the fragrance of the November garden? Once the rains begin, there is a distinct earthy, spicy woodland fragrance of old flowers, damp soil and...what else?

PLANTING: November is a great month to plant trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers and cool season annuals. Once the soil has been saturated by the first rains of the season and the air is cool and moist, the plants experience little shock when transplanted. This is especially true in the well-mulched garden. Frost sensitive plants including citrus, avocado, native plants from Baja California or the Channel Islands and many kinds of succulents from all over the world, should be protected through the winter, or wait until spring to plant.

If you feel your garden is lacking in fall foliage color, see if you can fit in a crape myrtle shrub or tree, lemon marigold (*Tagetes lemonii*) shrub or a relative of the California wild grape called "Roger's Red." There are many other fall-color favorites, but these three are also low-water and low-maintenance.

November is the month for planting spring bulbs like daffodils and narcissus. Purchase bulbs that are firm and without spots of mold. Plant bulbs where they will get a full day of sunshine. 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 high-phosphorus fertilizer mixed with soil to the base of the planting holes. All spring bulbs should be planted by Thanksgiving. You can also plant in containers, planting several types of bulbs in layers in order to have a long succession of blooms. Place a few inches of potting soil in the bottom of a large container with drainage holes and arrange daffodils or tulips closer together but not touching. Cover them with soil and add a layer of iris and hyacinth. Cover with more soil and then add a layer of muscari or crocus. Cover with soil and water thoroughly. Thanks to The Master Gardeners of Fresno County's book, "A Gardeners' Companion" for that idea.



If you grow dahlias, November is the month to dig and divide overcrowded tubers. Store them in a cool dry place until re-planting in February.

You can still plant winter vegetables in November, including greens, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage, especially early in the month when the soil is still warm. This is especially true if you are planting from seed, because the later you plant, the more chance you have of seeds decomposing before they germinate. It's best to germinate seeds in a greenhouse or with a heat mat and then transplant seedlings into the garden, or purchase

seedlings. Nitrogen is released from the soil if the soil temperature is over 50 degrees Fahrenheit but slows way down from December through mid-February. If you plant late in the month or into winter, just don't expect a burst of growth until the soil warms up. You might use bio-intensive farming methods and plant your crops one-half to three-quarters closer than you would in warmer seasons. Close planting creates a mini climate that is more balanced and speeds up growth. Thin extra plants as they grow if needed. With greens, from beets to lettuce, this also provides nutritious micro-green salad ingredients. Use mulch like straw or old hay to keep the soil temperature even.

It is best to transplant established shrubs, trees and perennials when they go dormant or drop their leaves, usually towards the end of the month or in winter. Dig them up carefully, taking as much of the existing root system as you can. Be sure to plant at the same ground level, or slightly higher, and water and mulch well. If you plant too deep, it may kill the plant next summer, especially on loamy-clay or clay soils.

MAINTAINING: 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. Our Master Gardener website has more complete instructions and illustrations on pruning trees.

https://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/Local_Gardening_Articles_-_Info/Landscape_Trees/

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

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 (dried fruit still hanging on the tree) 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 enough, however, if we have a wet winter, then spray again before the flower buds swell in the spring.



If you can, grind up pruned branches and leaves to use as mulch. I grind up everything I can fit in my grinder and haven't had a problem with over wintering pests. But if you know your plant clippings have a disease or major insect issue, send those to the green waste and you will need to purchase mulch. If we live in the city, it is sometimes hard to convince ourselves and our neighbors to use ordinary ground up plant materials instead of uniform bark nuggets. Any kind of mulch is better than nothing, so just do what works for you.

If the month is on the dry side, remember to deep water your trees and large shrubs, even if they have lost their leaves.

In general, your irrigation controller should be adjusted down even if we don't get a lot of rain. Cooler nights and shorter days mean that most plants will not need as much water, and water-logged roots could be a problem you won't see until next year when the plants try to start growing again. If you have a water budget feature, November can mean fifty or forty percent of July.

You may want to stop dead heading your roses to encourage them to stop blooming and settle into dormancy. All plants require a dormant period to thrive into old age. Some of our native plants go dormant in summer. We are more familiar with plants like deciduous trees and roses that go dormant in winter. Don't fertilize or try to keep them going too long. It is their season to wind down in preparation of a winter rest.

CONSERVING: If you have non-native milkweed, usually with orange or yellow flowers, make sure the flowers are pruned off by now to encourage Monarchs to migrate. The cold of winter will kill them if they stick around. You can check and refill bird feeders with fresh seed and check after rainstorms to make sure the seed isn't moldy. Consider leaving some seed stalks on some of your grasses and perennials for birds to forage this winter.

In the edible garden, add straw, old hay, alfalfa pellets and/or compost to fallow beds. If you take care of the soil, your plants will be stronger and better able to resist pest pressures next spring, making it possible to save time and money and reduce the need for synthetic chemicals. Keep after the weeds that use up nutrients. It's too late to solarize soil, but you can cover with weed cloth or other fabric that allows air and water exchange until spring.

Happy Thanksgiving! Happy Harvest!

The UCCE Master Gardeners will be available to answer your gardening questions at the following venues in & November:

Visalia Farmers' Market –Every Saturday morning (8-11 am), Sears parking lot, Mooney Blvd.

Nov. 2, 8 am -Noon: Tule River Native Garden, Tule River Parkway, west of Jaye St. Bridge, Porterville

Nov. 2, 10 am -4 pm: Foothills Festival @ River Ridge Ranch, Springville

Nov 14, 8 am -Noon: Visalia Sales Yard

For answers to all your home gardening questions, call the Master Gardeners in Tulare County at (559) 684-3325, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9:30 and 11:30 am; or Kings County at (559) 852-2736, Thursday Only, 9:30-11:30 a.m; or visit our website to search past articles, find links to UC gardening information, or to email us with your questions:

http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/

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