

October 2018, What To Do Now In Your Garden

Leimone Waite, Master Gardener, Oct. 20, 2018

Q. What should I be doing in my yard and garden this time of year?

A. Here is a list of activities that can be done in your garden and around your yard this time of year to prepare for winter and next year's garden season.

You can plant a fall or winter garden. It is not too late to plant cool season vegetables from starts. There are many vegetables that thrive in cooler weather and will winter over here in Redding. They include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, green and keeper onions, garlic and hardy spices like oregano and chives.

Direct seed root vegetables and peas. Remember that humidity is very low during this time of year and temperatures are still high, so keep new plantings well-watered.

To keep plants growing even into colder weather, cover at night with frames and frost cloth, or staked gallon milk jugs with the bottoms cut out and covered with towels or sheets to protect from frost.

Clean up leaves around roses, fruit trees and plants from this year's vegetable crops and flowers to discourage pests and diseases from overwintering.

Now is the time to trim back those shrubs and trees which will flower on new wood, like forsythia and crepe myrtle.



Multi colored gourds. (Photo: Robert Scheer/IndyStar)

To ready planting beds for next year, apply a thick layer of compost or leaf mulch on top of beds and then layers of newspaper or cardboard, held down with stones, over any beds that won't be used for fall or winter gardens. This will enrich the soil and keep the weeds out for easy spring planting.

As soon as your stone fruit trees have lost their leaves — December, or late November if we have an early frost, you can dormant spray with a copper spray for the first time to prevent peach leaf curl and shot hole disease. Dormant spray twice more around New Year's Day and Saint Valentine's Day.

Adjust run times on irrigation controllers for the cooler fall weather. As soon as the rains begin, and you can safely shut them off, carefully go over your drip or spray watering system to see what may need repairing or replacing.

Remove fallen leaves from ditches, down spout areas and storm drains to make way for the rain that's coming.

Mulch or mow leaves on your lawn and then start or add to your compost pile or leaf-mold pile

Dig up tuberous begonias and dahlias and dust with sulfur before storing.

Fertilize lawns with a good fall and winter fertilizer blend. Now is the time to reseed any bare spots.

Plant seeds for erosion control on any bare soil or burned areas.

Plant fava beans or crimson clover as a cover crop to improve garden beds.

Divide daylilies and any other clumping perennials or grasses.

Clean out bird feeders and ready any bird houses for the new season.

If you have cane berries, cut out old berry canes and tie this year's canes to support wires. The old canes should be turning brown, so they're easy to spot.

Remember to take time to enjoy the cool weather after our long, hot summer and take in all the delightful fall colors.

The Shasta Master Gardeners Program can be reached by phone at 242-2219 or email mastergardener@shastacollege.edu. The gardener office is staffed by volunteers trained by the University of California to answer gardeners' questions using information based on scientific research.