MONTHLY GARDEN CHORES—OCTOBER

*By Linda Lewis Griffith, UCCE Master Gardener*

October marks the end of summer and the beginning of the cool-weather season. You’ll be simultaneously cleaning out plants that are well past their prime while starting those veggies that don’t like the heat.

**Chores**

Clean-up: Control overwintering pests by removing fruit mummies, fallen leaves and diseased limbs. Dispose of them in green recycling bin to prevent the spread of pathogens.

Compost: Add disease-free garden waste, grass clippings, pruning material and leaves. Turn and keep as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Cover during rainy weather to prevent the pile from becoming waterlogged.

Drainage: Install downspout diverters to direct rain runoff to landscape trees and plants. Watch for standing water near tree trunks and the root zone of trees.

Frost: The first [frost](http://ucanr.edu/sites/gardenweb/files/29030.pdf) is likely this month in North County. Protect sensitive plants by moving them indoors, keeping them well watered or covering them at night.

Irrigation: Short, cooler days mean less water is needed in the garden. Reduce watering time on irrigation controllers by 25 percent. Or consider turning irrigation off if rainfall is adequate. Keep in mind that new plants need to be watered until they become established.

Fertilizing: Stop feeding all plants as their growth slows or they go dormant.

**Landscape**

Clean-up: Clean up fallen leaves and blossoms around plants.

Plant: Plant California natives, bare root deciduous trees, shrubs and vines, fruits and nuts, grapes and roses. Select species and cultivars that are adapted to your specific microclimate. Sow native wild flowers, spring blooming flowers and grasses. Plant spring bulbs.

Propagate: Divide or transplant hardy perennials (such as asters and chrysanthemums). Divide spring flower bulbs (daffodils, Pacific Coast iris and tulips).

**Fruits and Vegetables**

Harvest: Harvest the final late summer produce, such as tomatoes, melons and pumpkins.

Plant: Plant [cool season vegetables](http://ucanr.edu/sites/gardenweb/Vegetables/?uid=8&ds=462) that grow best when daily average temperatures are between 55 to 75 degrees F. Plants in this group include beets, carrots, kale, spinach, lettuce, broccoli and onions.

Soil: Nourish soil for next year by planting [cover crops](http://acmg.ucanr.edu/files/121648.pdf), such as clover, field peas, fava beans and vetches.

**Pests**

[Asian citrus psyllid](ipm.ucanr.edu/QT/asiancitruscard.html): Check new leaves for eggs, nymphs and adults.

[Citrus leafminer:](ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74137.html) A relatively new arrival in our area, the larvae of this tiny moth leave a serpentine trail on the leaves of citrus and closely related plants.

[Snails and slugs](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7427.html): The brown garden snail was brought from France for food in 1850 and has since become the number one pest in California gardens. Keep them in check by clearing debris away from plants, removing places for them to hide, using drip irrigation instead of overhead watering, and hand collecting them in the evening or early morning.