

WEEKLY NEWS COLUMN
September 28, 2021

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OCTOBER GARDEN GUIDE

Fall is here and we're looking for all the changes- cooler temperatures, changing (and dropping) leaves, wrapping up one growing season and preparing for the next year. The Cowley County Extension Office has resources available to producers to help improve their lawns and gardens including Kansas Healthy Yards and Communities, an initiative of K-State Research and Extension to have yards and communities that enhance our quality of life through earth-friendly practices. The following is the monthly garden guide for the month of October from kansashealtyards.org.

Shorter days and cooler nights mean the leaves will turn and fall from trees. Take advantage of the weather to plant trees, shrubs, spring-flowering bulbs, and mums.

Vegetables and Fruits

- Plant garlic cloves for next summer's harvest. Fall planting gets a jump on spring conditions.
- After a light frost, dig sweet potatoes and cure them for two weeks in a warm location. Then store in a cool, dry location for longer keeping.
- Harvest peanuts and roast for a homegrown snack.
- Pick pumpkins and winter squash. Keep in a warm area for a couple of weeks, and then store in a cool, dry location.
- Till the garden at the end of the season and add organic matter such as manure or compost to improve the soil structure.
- Make notes of successes and failures in the garden for next year.
- Remove hulls from black walnuts to retain good color of the kernels.
- Continue to harvest apples.
- Pick up and discard fallen fruit to reduce disease next year.

Flowers

- Plant spring flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, and crocus, for a splash of early season color.
- Remove dead annuals from the garden.
- Trim perennial stalks to tidy the garden for winter.
- Pot bulbs for indoor forcing.
- Clean up dead iris and peony foliage and destroy it to decrease the spread of disease.
- After a light frost, dig canna, glads, dahlias and other tender bulbs for winter storage.
- Make notes about the garden to document successes and failures.

Lawns

- Continue to mow the lawn if necessary, bluegrass 2 inches, tall fescue 2½ inches.
- Core aerate turf to reduce soil compaction, improve drainage, break up thatch, and help nutrients move into the soil.

- Control dandelions, henbit, and chickweed with a broadleaf herbicide while seedlings are young.
- Sharpen mower blade for a clean cut.
- Check oil level in your lawn mower.
- Keep fallen leaves removed from the lawn to prevent shading and dieback on grass.

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant new trees and shrubs and keep them watered during dry winter months.
- Once the leaves have fallen, transplant trees and shrubs.
- Trim dead, broken, or diseased branches from trees and shrubs.
- Enjoy fall leaf color, which normally hits its peak about the third week of October.

Miscellaneous

- Drain and store garden hoses and sprinklers for winter.
- Prepare the compost pile for winter. Add new materials and turn.
- Store unused seeds in a cool, dry location.

For more information on lawns and gardens, contact the Cowley County Extension Office
221-5450, 441-4565.

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