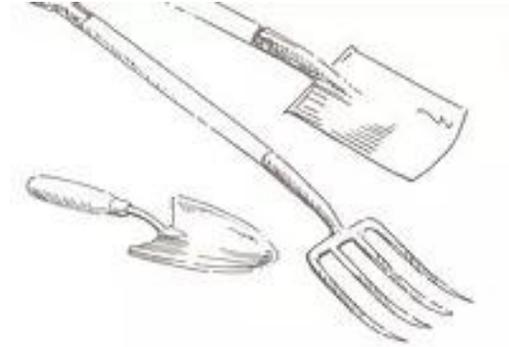


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October Gardening Tips



October marks the beginning of our first genuine days of autumn. We have already felt some cooler temperatures at night and in the mornings between our summer-like hot spells.

In Southern California, our mild Mediterranean climate allows for year-round planting, but fall is one of the best times to garden. The soil remains warm, and the cooler season is approaching. As the temperatures begin to drop, gardening becomes even

more enjoyable.

October is the prime month for planting cool-season flowers and vegetables. While you won't see their colors until next spring, October is also an ideal time to plant perennials. By planting now, they will build a strong root system during the cool weather and then bloom with vibrant color in the spring.

Trees and shrubs: It's a great month to shop for trees and shrubs as they're showing their true colors. Planting can take place now and over the next several months, letting strong healthy roots develop over the winter.

Watering: It's easy to forget about watering duties once it finally cools down, but proper moisture now is key to your plants' successful survival over the cooler winter months. Check the moisture of all plants, especially those in dry sheltered areas such as under eaves and around tall evergreens. Adjust your watering based on rainfall and anticipate precipitation by placing rain barrels in your yard for future irrigation.

Composting: Rake or otherwise gather all debris - from leaves to grass clippings to spent plants and vegetables, and either give the compost pile a good feeding or spade them directly into the ground. As an alternative to raking, if you have drifts of piled leaves, mow over them in the grass to break them up and make a great brown-and-green composting combo.

Pest control: Slugs don't slow down as the weather gets cooler; in fact, you'll likely find them at all life stages in October- from eggs to adults. Take whatever measures you prefer to eliminate slugs. It's best to catch them at early stages to stop the reproduction cycle. Keep the ground raked and clean to reduce their habitat.

Weeding: Stay ahead of weeds this month - they serve as homes for pests and bugs. Destroying them before they flower and seed will save you work in the future.

Houseplants: If you treat houseplants with fertilizer and plant food, keep them warm and away from direct sunlight after treating. Fertilize houseplants now, and they shouldn't need it again until March.

Roses: Early in the month, feed roses for the last time this year. Give roses up to one inch of water twice a week unless it rains.

Azaleas and Camellias: The fungus that causes petal blight in azaleas and camellias overwinters in fallen flowers, leaves, and old mulch. To decrease the chances of blight, remove all the debris under the plants and apply new mulch. Fruits and veggies: Harvesting fruits and vegetables is the best part of growing them. After you have finished harvesting your summer vegetables, you can plant a cover crop of clovers, cow peas, soybeans, or vetches for the purpose of plowing under next spring. These nitrogen-producing plants will provide good organic matter and food for your garden crops next year, as well as helping to control weeds over the winter.

Clean and oil your garden tools! Place some sand and some oil in a large bucket, then slide your garden tools in and out of the sand. This will do an excellent job of cleaning them as well as applying a light coat of oil to prevent rusting.

Clean your gutters and downspouts to remove fallen leaves and other debris. Plugged gutters can cause serious damage to your home as well as your garden, especially if we experience any significant rainfall this fall and winter. Remove Old Fruit: This month, remove all fallen fruit from around fruit trees and any fruit that has mummified on the trees. Such fruit will harbor overwintering pests and disease organisms.

The **birds** will soon begin their migrations. Give them a helping hand by providing them with some food for their long journey. No one likes to travel on an empty stomach, and you may even persuade a few of them to stick around for winter if they know they have a reliable food source! We carry wild birdseed at the nursery for your bird feeders and bird houses.

Choose Sunny Planting Sites: When planning your fall garden, remember that the angle of the sun changes from spring-summer to fall-winter. Areas of the garden that were in full sunlight during the summer may be in partial or full shade during the fall and winter.

New Plantings

Cool-Season Vegetables: Plant cool-season vegetables such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, lettuce and other greens.

Cool-Season Flowers: Including calendula, cineraria, dianthus, delphiniums, Iceland poppies, nemesia, pansies, snapdragon, stock, and wild flowers.

Wildflowers: For long-lasting color, choose a western seed mix that has both annuals and perennials, or make your own mix using your favorites. Good candidates for a wildflower mix include California poppies, larkspur, linaria, clarkia, Chinese houses, godetia, and gypsophila.