

October Gardening Calendar

Ornamentals

- **Weeks 1-4:** Continue watering, especially evergreens if soils are dry.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Nuts or seeds of woody plants usually require exposure to 3 months cold before sprouting. This may be provided by outdoor planting in fall or "stratifying" in an unsealed bag of damp peat moss placed in the refrigerator.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Container grown and B & B trees and shrubs can be planted. Loosen the soil in an area 5 times the diameter of the root ball before planting. Mulch well after watering.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Plant spring bulbs among hostas, ferns, daylilies or ground covers. As these plants grow in the spring they will hide the dying bulb foliage.
- **Weeks 1-2:** For best bloom later this winter, Christmas cactus, potted azaleas and kalanchoe may be left outdoors until night temperatures drop to about 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Spring bulbs for forcing can be potted up now and stored in a cool, frost-free place until it is time to bring indoors, usually 12 to 15 weeks.
- **Weeks 2-3:** Cannas and dahlias can be dug when frost nips their foliage. Allow the plants to dry under cover in an airy, frost-free place before storage.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Transplant deciduous trees once they have dropped their leaves.
- **Week 4:** Plant tulips now.
- **Week 4:** Trees may be fertilized now. This is best done following soil test guidelines.

Lawns

- **Weeks 1-2:** Seeding should be finished by October 15.
- **Weeks 2-3:** Broadleaf herbicides can be applied now to control cool season weeds such as chickweed and dandelion.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Continue mowing lawns until growth stops.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Keep leaves raked off lawns to prevent smothering grass.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Now is a good time to apply lime if soil tests indicate the need.
- **Week 4:** Winterize lawn mowers before storage.

Vegetables

- **Weeks 1-4:** Sow cover crops such as winter rye after crops are harvested.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Harvest winter squash and pumpkins before frost. For best storage quality, leave an inch or two of stem on each fruit.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Dig sweet potatoes before a bad freeze.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Gourds should be harvested when their shells become hard or when their color changes from green to brown.
- **Weeks 1-2:** A few degrees of frost protection may be gained by covering tender plants with sheets or light-weight fabric row covers.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Continue harvesting tender crops before frost.
- **Week 2:** The average first frost usually arrives about October 15-20.

Fruits

- **Weeks 1-4:** Store apples in a cool basement in old plastic sacks that have been perforated for good air circulation.
- **Weeks 2-3:** Persimmons start to ripen, especially after frost.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Monitor fruit plantings for mouse activity and take steps for their control if present.
- **Week 4:** Place wire guards around trunks of young fruit trees for protection against mice and rabbits.

Gardening Calendar supplied by the staff of the William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening located at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. (www.GardeningHelp.org)