October Gardening Tips
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Annuals and Perennials
- Add a touch of fall to your home and landscape with sedum, hardy mums, asters, and fall pansies.
- Keep collecting matured seeds. Dry them out and place them in labeled coin envelopes within an air tight container, and store in a cool place.
- Mulch perennial beds using a loose organic material such as bark chips or leaves to keep down weeds, preserve moisture and give roots a longer time to grow before the soil freezes.
- Remove plant debris from the flower beds. Bag any diseased plant parts and put them in the trash or take them to a landfill but do not compost.

Education and Events
- Take a scenic drive to observe the changing fall foliage. The CT DEEP has fall foliage driving routes for Connecticut.
- Visit the Wee Faerie Village at the Florence Griswold Museum.
- Contact your local garden club for a list of upcoming programs or sign up for a workshop, lecture, or course at your local garden center or through the UConn Master Gardener Program.
- Visit the Connecticut Garlic & Harvest Festival in Bethlehem, Connecticut

Houseplants
- To begin pre-bloom dormancy for amaryllis, stop watering it and place in a cool, dark place.
- Pot up hyacinths, tulips, and other pre-cooled bulbs and store in a cool, dark place until ready to force.
- Bring tropical plants and houseplants that have been on your patio indoors once the night temperatures drop below 50°F. Always check for insects when bringing plants inside. Rinse foliage, remove the top layer of the soil surface, and wipe down containers.

In the Vegetable Garden
- Harvest gourds on a cool, clear day. Leave a few inches of stem attached. Wash fruits with mild soapy warm water, rinse and dry.
- Squash and pumpkins should be harvested when they have bright color and a thick, hard skin. These vegetables will be abundant in farmer’s markets and will make a colorful and healthy addition to fall dinners.
- Use dried herbs to make fragrant fall wreaths and dried flower arrangements.
- Sketch out where you planted various vegetables in your garden back in the spring. This will come in handy next spring so when you plant, you can rotate your crops and help prevent disease.
- Rosemary is not hardy in most areas of CT. Bring plants in before temperatures drop too low but check plants thoroughly for mealybugs. Rinse foliage, remove the top layer of the soil surface, and wipe down containers.
- Plant garlic from October 1st to November 15th. Place each clove pointed-side up at a depth of 2-4” about 6” apart.
- Beets, parsnips, and carrots can be covered with a thick layer of straw or leaves and left in the ground for harvest, as needed, during the winter. This may not be an option in areas with heavy vole populations.
Avoid the spring rush and have your soil tested now by the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory.

As tomatoes end their production cut down plants and pick up any debris and put in the trash or take to a landfill. Many diseases will over-winter on old infected leaves and stems, so these are best removed from the property.

Pot up some chives and oregano to bring indoors and use all winter long.

In areas not hit by frost, there is still time to harvest and dry oregano leaves.

Remove plant debris from the vegetable garden. Bag any diseased plant parts and put it in the trash or take it to a landfill but do not compost.

Divide and replant clumps of rhubarb that have become congested.

Cut asparagus ferns to the ground once they have been hit with a frost and turned brown.

Insects

- If root maggots have been an issue with brassicas and root vegetables till the soil over to expose the pupae to winter cold.
- Remove, bag and trash any Spongy moth, Bagworm, or Eastern tent caterpillar egg masses or spray them with a commercial horticultural oil to smother them. Avoid getting excessive oil on bark.

Landscape and Lawns

Fruits

- Prune fall-bearing raspberries after harvest.
- Cold-hardy fruit trees such as Honeycrisp and Cortland apples, Reliance peach, Superior plum, most pawpaws and American persimmon can still be planted into October. Continue to water until the ground freezes hard.

Lawns

- Use a mulching blade to chop leaves finely and let them decompose on the lawn.
- Avoid the spring rush and have your soil tested now by the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory.
- Renovate the lawn by thatching or aerating if needed.
- Keep any areas seeded in September well-watered.

Trees and Shrubs

- Remove, bag and trash any Spongy moth, Bagworm, or Eastern tent caterpillar egg masses or spray them with a commercial horticultural oil to smother them. Avoid getting excessive oil on bark.
- Cut down stems and foliage of herbaceous perennials after two or three hard frosts or when leaves begin to brown.
- If rain is lacking, continue to thoroughly water trees, shrubs, planting beds, and lawn areas. It is especially important to keep newly planted evergreens watered.
- Spread mulch around trees and perennials once the ground has frozen. Do not spread it beforehand as it can delay dormancy for plants and provides cover for chipmunks and voles.

Wildlife

- Outwit hungry squirrels and chipmunks by planting bulbs in established groundcovers.
- Limit herbaceous plant material located a few feet away from the house to eliminate hiding places for insects and mice, which could wind up indoors as temperatures plummet.

Yard Accessories and Miscellanea

- Cover small ponds and water features with netting to keep out falling leaves.
- Drain garden hoses and store in a shed, garage, or basement for the winter. Turn off all outside faucets.

Despite good cultural practices, pests and diseases at times may appear. Chemical control should be used only after all other methods have failed.

For pesticide information please call UConn Home and Garden Education Center weekdays, in Connecticut call toll free 877-486-6271. Out of state call 860-486-6271

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