

Note that the information in our monthly tips is intended for gardening in the Bountiful, UT area and may not be accurate for different climates.

October Gardening

Ave High 67° F.
Ave Low 39° F.
Ave Moisture 1.14"

Each year is different, let the weather be your guide. Use this gardening guide as a simple reminder as to what needs to be done in your garden this month.

October is the time for our first killing frost. True enough, some years the frosts might hit in September, but more often than not, October brings the first frosts of the season that kill the annual flowers. For a short time after the frosts, and before first really cold weather of the season sets in, we can enjoy the brief and lovely Indian Summer.



October is a busy time for gardeners, and it's great to get out in the garden when the weather is so wonderful. It is a time of fall planting, winter preparation and yard cleaning chores.

Planting, transplanting, watering, planting spring bulbs, and slug control head the list of October gardening projects. Fall is the time to begin getting the garden ready for winter, so whatever you can accomplish in the garden this month will definitely help cut down on work for the rest of the fall and winter. Plus, it is great to accomplish these tasks while the weather is still reasonably warm.

As the leaves change into their brilliant fall colors, you realize that winter is just around the corner. It's a great time to get out and have fun in your gardens. You still have many tasks to accomplish, even after the first frosts of winter.

Flowers

✓ Plant spring flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, and crocus, for a splash of early season color. Wait until the soil temperature drops below 50°F. to actually plant the bulbs.

✓ Other spring blooming bulbs you may consider are: anemone, scilla, fritillaria, allium, muscari, dutch iris, miniature, iris, miniature daffodils, snowdrops, and ranunculus. Select healthy, disease free bulbs. Add Bone meal or Bulb fertilizer into the planting hole, as you prepare the soil.

✓ Remove dead annuals from the garden. Do not leave them for spring cleanup.

✓ 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.

✓ Store unused seeds in a cool, dry location.

✓ Gladiolas, Dahlias and other tender bulbs should be dug before the ground freezes, and stored in a cool, dark area. Dahlia and Begonia tubers should be stored in a box of slightly moist peat moss. Gladiola corms can



be stored in a cardboard boxes without additional packing.

✓ Be sure that new plantings, and perennials that were divided and moved last month, are kept watered if there has been insufficient rainfall.

✓ There is still time to set out pansies, flowering Kale, flowering Cabbage, and fall mums. Keep a little color in the garden for as long as possible.

✓ Watch your thermometer on colder nights. A windless, cold, clear night usually means a killing frost. You can keep your Chrysanthemums and Asters blooming for quite a while longer if you take the time to provide a little frost protection for them. A small, simple frame covered with cheesecloth or an old bed sheet placed over your plants on frosty nights, can add a month, or more, of garden blooms. Don't forget to remove the cover as soon as the danger has passed!

✓ Tender plants should be moved indoors or moved into a coldframe before the first frost.

✓ Mulching fall planted perennials will keep the soil warmer longer, allowing root growth to continue. However, the plants do need time to harden off for winter. Spread a thin layer of mulch right after fall planting, and then add a thicker layer once the ground has frozen.

✓ Collect and save seeds of vegetables and flowers to use next spring.

✓ Mark your perennial gardens with permanent tags, or create a map showing their locations so you'll know where and what they are when they die back at the end of the season. This will help you to avoid digging up something you intended to keep when you plant bulbs and plants this fall and next spring.

Vegetables & Fruit

✓ Continue to watch for insect, or disease damage throughout the garden, and take the necessary steps to control the problem. Many insects do not die in the winter, they just hibernate until next spring.

✓ 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.

✓ Make notes of successes and failures in the garden for next year.



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✓ Remove hulls from black walnuts to retain good color of the kernels.

✓ Harvest all pears when they first start to drop. Store them in a cool, dark location until they ripen. Winter pears do not ripen until December or January.



✓ Continue to harvest apples. Pick up and discard fallen fruit to reduce disease next year. Fallen fruit is also an excellent food source to attract unwanted animals and deer in the winter.

✓ Do not store bruised fruit; use it first.

✓ Harvesting fruits and vegetables is the best part of growing them. You may have grown much more than your family can consume. Share the abundance of squash and tomatoes with friends and neighbors. Although most fruits and vegetables are best when eaten fresh, you can extend the season by freezing, drying, storing, or canning.

✓ Listen to the weatherman and watch the news. Covering tomatoes and vegetables at night, with a frost blanket, can extend your fall harvest 2 to 4 weeks if you are lucky.



✓ Dig and divide clumps of rhubarb and horseradish.

✓ Cut back raspberry canes that have grown too long, to prevent damage caused by snow or winter winds.

✓ Some root crops, such as carrots, onions, and parsnips can be left in the ground and dug up as needed. Apply enough mulch to keep the ground from freezing, and the crop will be kept fresh until it is needed.

✓ After you have finished harvesting your summer vegetables, plant a cover crop, and rototill it in early next spring. The nitrogen producing plants, also know as green manure crops, provide good organic matter and food for your garden crops next year.

Houseplants

✓ Both Christmas Cactus and Poinsettias need to be kept indoors in a spot where they get ten hours of bright light and fourteen hours of total darkness, each day. Room temperatures should be around 65 to 70 degrees for the Poinsettias, but cooler (around 55 to 60) for the Christmas cactus.

✓ The longer your house plants were allowed to remain outside in the fall, the more shock they will go through when they are finally moved indoors. If you haven't brought



them in yet, do it now. Watch for insect or disease damage and take the necessary steps to control the problem.

✓ Amaryllis - Your amaryllis bulb should be dormant by now. Cut off the leaves. Wash and trim the roots, leaves a few of the best ones. Store the bulb in a cool (45-50 F), dark, dry area for 6 to 8 weeks. Lay the bulb on it's side.



✓ Lucky Bamboo - Fertilize your plant after you change the water.

✓ Bonsai - Stop fertilizing your bonsai plants. The shorter days put your plants into a 'fall and winter mode', requiring less water and no fertilizer.

✓ Deciduous bonsai plants will begin to drop their leaves.

✓ Many 'dormant' bonsai plants can be put into a shed or root cellar for winter storage.

Lawn

✓ Water lawns with 1 inch of water each week. Apply 1/2" of water each time you water. Do not water your lawn every day. By mid October, you lawn should not need any extra water, and should start going dormant for the winter.

✓ Apply **Fall & Winter Lawn Fertilizer** or **Dr Earth Organic Lawn Food**. A lawn fertilizer application made in the late fall encourages root growth, increases winter hardiness, and promotes quick greening in spring.

✓ Rake up fallen leaves from your lawn each week instead of leaving the job until all the leaves have fallen. In fall, lawn grass still needs sunlight as it is creating sugars to store in its root system for good growth next spring. Leaving the leaves on top of the lawn can smother the grass and weaken it.

✓ Use your yard's leaves: Consider shredding fall leaves and using them as winter mulch on flower beds. You can also add shredded leaves to the compost pile. In a season or so, they'll make the best treat your garden soil can have. You can use a chipper shredder, if you have one, or just run your lawn mower over the leaves.

✓ Keep mowing the lawn as long as your grass is still growing.

✓ Control lawn weeds: October is the most effective time of the year for this job. October is the best time of the year to control morning glory, both in the lawn and in the gardens.

✓ Aerate, or power rake your lawn, and reseed any dead or thin spots. This is the



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best time of the year to lay sod, overseed an old lawn, or start a new lawn from seed, because temperatures are cooler, and grass loves cool weather.



Miscellaneous

√ Clean and oil your garden tools for winter storage. 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 rain gutters and downspouts to remove fallen leaves and other debris.

√ One important job in the early fall garden is to continue to water your plants, especially your evergreens and trees and shrubs especially if it isn't raining enough. Going into the winter well hydrated will help keep your plants thriving.

√ Drain and store garden hoses and sprinklers for winter.

√ Prepare the compost pile for winter. Add new materials and turn it regularly. Add 1 cup of ammonia sulphate for every 12" of leaves you add to a 10' by 10' area to help them decompose during the winter.

√ Snails and slugs are still eating your garden. One last application of slug bait will eliminate a lot of slugs and snails, and prevent them from reproducing again this fall. Resulting in fewer slugs and snails next spring.

√ Make one last effort at weeding. Any weed which you can eliminate from the garden this fall will possibly prevent hundreds of weed seeds from sprouting in the garden next spring.

Trees & Shrubs

√ Plant new trees and shrubs and keep them watered during dry winter months. It is one of the best times of the year to plant most trees and shrubs. They will get a good root system established before the hot summer weather next year.

√ 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 second or third week of October.



√ Throughout the fall and winter months you can plant or transplant both evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs. During these months of dormancy you can do your shrub and tree moving with great success.



Wild Bird

√ The birds will soon begin migrating. Give them some food for their long journey. You may persuade a few of them to stick around for the winter, if they know they have a reliable food source. Once you start feeding the birds, make sure you keep a consistent supply of food available all winter long.

√ Birds love; seed, fruit, suet, apples, orange slices, soaked raisins and currants, thistle seed, sunflower seed, millet, and much, much more.

√ Do not feed birds breads or salty, sugary snacks. Most human food is unhealthy for birds.

√ Locate your bird feeder in a sheltered area, out of the rain and wind, so the feed stays dry.

√ Keep your feeder a safe distance from protective shrubbery where house cats might lurk.

√ Clean feeders regularly to prevent diseases. Scrape bird droppings and moldy food off feeders and rinse or wipe clean with a disinfectant solution of one part vinegar to twenty parts water. Allow feeders to dry before refilling.

√ Do not build feeders out of plywood, as some birds will eat the glue.

√ Not all birdseed mixes will suit all wild birds. Some birds, including finches and grosbeaks, eat only seeds and nuts. Others, such as chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers, rely on both plant and animal sources of food.

√ Birds will often sort through mixed seed and discard what they do not want. Typically, less waste occurs if you provide only one type of food per feeder, rather than mixed birdseed. Experts recommend black oil sunflower seed as one of the best single seeds to attract a variety of birds to your feeder.

√ Insect-eating birds, such as woodpeckers, chickadees and nuthatches, will benefit from additional suet in the winter.

Having a source of water (especially a moving source) can help attract even more birds.

