

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.

September Gardening

Ave High 80° F.
Ave Low 50° F.
Ave Moisture .89"

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.

September is a transitional month between summer and fall. While there are plenty of hot and humid days still ahead, the temperatures are slowly returning to more comfortable daytime levels. More often than not gardening activities start to pick up as the weather mellows and moderates. The welcome rains return, and once-browned lawns start to resume growth and with a lush green appearance.



Many previews of fall are at hand. The asters and chrysanthemums start their annual show just about now. Lots of lovely mid to late season plants, such as coneflowers, garden phlox, and black-eyed susans continue to shine from summer into fall, if they were kept deadheaded and properly watered.

An occasional tree will start to turn color early in the season. By month's end, autumn is in full force with many trees taking on their glorious fall colors.

As the summer season winds down to fall, it is time to clean up the garden and plan for next spring. Reduce water to trees and shrubs, allowing them to harden off before winter sets in, but do not let them dry out before the cold weather arrives. Remove vegetables and annual flowers and compost them, unless you had any plant disease problems. Send any diseased plants to the recycle yard at the landfill. Keep after the weeds and the snails!

Flowers

✓ Wait until after the soil temperature drops below 50°F. to plant spring flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, allium, fritallaria, dwarf irises, anemone, and crocus.

Select healthy, disease free bulbs. Add Bone meal or Bulb fertilizer into the planting hole, as you prepare the soil. You are not fertilizing them for the coming spring's flowers, you are fertilizing them to help them grow to improve the following year's flowers. The bulb already has all the food it needs to bloom stored inside.

✓ Pansies, flowering Kale, flowering Cabbage, fall Asters and fall mums may be planted now, to give a little color to the garden when the summer flowers start to fade away. Pansies, flowering cabbage and flowering kale remain colorful through the winter and early next spring.

✓ Scatter the seeds of perennials in a row or in open beds this month so



that the young seedlings will be ready to be transplanted into their permanent spot next spring.

✓ As the weather cools, perennials, which have overgrown their space or become crowded, should be dug and divided, or moved to a new area of the garden. New, or replacement perennials, can also be planted this month.



✓ Tender bulbs should be dug up and stored in a cool, dark area. Wait until after the first frost to dig gladiolus. After the foliage turns yellow, dig them up and cut off the leaves. Soak the corms in warm water and dust them to prevent insect damage. Let them air dry before storing for winter.

✓ Dig, divide, or plant peonies. Peonies only need to be divided every 10 to 15 years. If your peonies don't bloom, dig them up to make sure they are not planted too deeply. Examine the tubers for insect or disease problems and then replant them at the proper depth.

✓ Remove seedheads from perennials to prevent reseeding in the garden.

✓ Mark your perennials 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.

✓ Think about the bulbs you want to plant this fall. You can pick them out, but do not plant them until after the first frost.

Trees & Shrubs

✓ **Fall is a great time to select and plant trees and shrubs.** Fall planting encourages good root development, allowing the plants to get established before spring. If the weather is dry, provide water right up until the ground freezes.

✓ Stop fertilizing your trees and flowering shrubs in August to allow the plant to harden off before winter. Other areas of the country, especially California or the South, promote fertilizing trees in the fall. However, in Utah, we recommend early spring fertilizing, not fall fertilizing.

Vegetables & Fruit

✓ Harvesting fruits and vegetables is the best part of growing them.



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Enjoy the harvest and share your abundance of squash and tomatoes with friends and neighbors.



✓ Herb plants can be dug from garden and placed in pots for indoor use this winter.

✓ Remove small tomatoes from their vines to increase late development of more mature fruits.

✓ Fruits and vegetables should be checked regularly for ripeness. A little practice and experience will tell you when your produce is at its peak of flavor, and that is when it should be harvested.

✓ Once the tops of onions have withered, the bulbs should be lifted and dried in a warm, dry, sunny location for about 10 days. Then they should be stored in a cool, dark, dry place.

✓ Some root crops, such as carrots, onions, and parsnips can be left in the ground and dug up as needed. Apply enough straw or mulch to keep the ground from freezing, so it is easy to harvest the veggies. Your vegetables will be kept fresh until they are harvested. A root cellar is another excellent way to store fresh vegetables and fruits during the winter.

✓ Harvest pumpkins when the flesh is completely orange and 'tough'. Avoid carrying them by the stem.

✓ Harvest winter squash to eat anytime when it has good color and size. Harvest winter squash for storage when rind is hard enough not to puncture with a fingernail.

✓ After you have finished harvesting your summer vegetables, plant a cover crop of clover, cow peas, or annual ryegrass and plow it under next spring. These nitrogen producing plants, also known as green manure crops, will provide good organic matter and food for your garden crops next year, as well as helping to control weeds over the winter.

✓ Continue spraying for codling moth and peach tree borers. Watch for Woolly Apple Aphids on the branches of apple trees and in willow trees in the fall.



Lawn

✓ Water your lawn 1.5 inches per week. Apply 1/2" of water each time you water. Do not water your lawn every day.

✓ When the temperatures begin to drop, fertilize your lawn with a slow-release fertilizer. Use either Fall & Winter Lawn fertilizer, or Dr Earth Organic Lawn Food.

An application of Humic Acid on the grass is also great in the fall.

✓ Spray lawns to control oxalis, spurge, dandelions, clover and morning glory.

✓ September is one of the best months of the entire year for seeding or sodding new lawns.

✓ 'Rust' is a lawn disease that shows up in the fall. It creates little orange lesions on the blades of grass. When you walk across the lawn, your shoes get covered by the orange powder: 'Rust'. It does not kill the lawn, but it is a pesky disease that you have to spray to prevent. Once the disease manifests its symptoms, it is too late to spray for it.

✓ If the lawn needs thatching, it can be done during the early fall. Over-seed old lawns with fresh seed to help fill in the bare spots and to crowd out weeds. Over-seeding can invigorate and revive a struggling lawn.

Houseplants

✓ Late this month Poinsettias and Christmas cactus should be brought back indoors and you should begin preparing them for Christmas flowering.

✓ Poinsettias are short day plants. Although they will eventually bloom, if you want the plants in bloom for the holidays they must be kept at about 65 to 70 degrees, and subjected to at least six weeks of 14 hours of total darkness per day (start mid to late September). Place the plant in a closet or an unlighted room, or cover the plant with black cloth, black plastic over a frame, or put it in a cardboard box. The plant must have a minimum of 4 hours of direct sun, or 10 hours of bright light each day. Fertilizing with Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer every 3 to 4 weeks should help encourage the development of flower buds.

✓ Christmas cactus needs the same general care, with the exception that they require cooler temperatures of about 50 to 60 degrees F. Sometimes just putting your Christmas cactus in an unheated room, right next to a window is sufficient to help it bloom on time.

✓ Pot up some spring flowering bulbs for indoor color during the winter. Store the pots in a cool, dark place, until new growth emerges from the soil, and then move them to a bright window.

✓ Continue to watch for insect or disease damage and take the necessary steps to control the problem.



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√ Bring houseplants inside before temperatures drop into the fifties. Clean and wash all plants before moving them indoors, to reduce insects. Apply Bonide Systemic Houseplant Insecticide to the soil to help prevent an outbreak of insects inside your front room. Fertilize houseplants before winter conditions arrive and growth slows.



√ Gradually stop watering your Amaryllis until the leaves die. After the leaves die, cut off the dead leaves, remove the soil from the roots, and store the Amaryllis bulb in a cool, dark area for 6 to 8 weeks before re potting it.

Miscellaneous

√ Snails do not die in the winter, they hibernate until spring. The more snails you eliminate this fall the fewer you will have to deal with next spring.

√ One last effort at weeding will help to improve the appearance of your garden throughout the winter. Remove weeds from garden plantings before going to seed.

√ Pick apples and pears and store in a cool place to extend freshness.



√ Clean up garden areas to reduce insects and disease as plants die back for winter.

√ You can still plant trees and shrubs, both deciduous and evergreen.

√ Rake up fallen leaves and compost them. Do not compost walnut leaves, they are bad for the soil. Pine needles, in moderation, are great to break up hard, compacted soil.

√ Prune broken and dead branches from trees anytime you see them.

√ Avoid pruning spring flowering shrubs, such as lilac, quince, and forsythia to ensure plenty of spring flowers.

Wildbirds

√ Change and clean the water in your bird bath regularly, and keep it filled. Standing water is not healthy for the birds, and may become a breeding ground for mosquito larvae.



√ Small birds love Nyger Seed.

√ Keep the hummingbird feeder fresh and clean. Keep feeding hummingbirds until you do not see one for a week, then remove your feeder.

Hummingbird Trivia:

√ There are more than 325 hummingbird species in the world. Only 8 species regularly breed in the United States, though up to two dozen species may visit the country.



√ Hummingbirds cannot walk or hop, though their feet can be used to scoot sideways while they are perched.

√ Hummingbirds have 1,000-1,500 feathers, the fewest number of feathers of any bird species in the world.

√ The average ruby-throated hummingbird weighs 3 grams. In comparison, a nickel weighs 4.5 grams.

√ A hummingbird's maximum forward flight speed is 30 miles per hour, though the birds can reach up to 60 miles per hour in a dive.

√ Hummingbirds lay the smallest eggs of all birds. They measure less than 1/2 inch long but may represent as much as 10 percent of the mother's weight at the time the eggs are laid.

√ A hummingbird must consume approximately 1/2 of its weight in sugar daily, and the average hummingbird feeds 5-8 times per hour.

√ A hummingbird's wings beat between 50 and 200 flaps per second depending on the direction of flight and air conditions.

√ An average hummingbird's heart rate is more than 1,200 beats per minute.

√ At rest, a hummingbird takes an average of 250 breaths per minute.

√ The rufous hummingbird has the longest migration of any hummingbird species with a distance of more than 3,000 miles from the bird's nesting grounds in Alaska and Canada to its winter habitat in Mexico.

√ The ruby-throated hummingbird flies 500 miles nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico during both its spring and fall migrations.

√ Depending on the species, habitat conditions, predators and other factors, the average life-span of a wild hummingbird is 3-12 years.

√ Hummingbirds have no sense of smell but have very keen eyesight.

√ Hummingbirds do not suck nectar through their long bills, they lick it with fringed, forked tongues.

√ A hummingbird can lick 10-15 times per second while feeding.

√ Hummingbirds digest natural sucrose in 20 minutes with 97 percent efficiency for converting the sugar into energy.

√ The peak fall migration period for hummingbirds is from mid-July through August or early September, depending on the route.

