

Hastings Nature & Garden Center

Things to do in September

Now that we have made it through summer, September signals the approach of fall. Most gardens (and gardeners!) will show signs of stress brought on by the heat and drought.

Perennials and annuals

- Plant Pansies, flowering Kale and Cabbage, and fall mums to give a little color to the garden.
- Scatter 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.
- Dig and divide perennials which have overgrown their space.
- Plant new or replacement perennials.
- Cut back and fertilize annuals to promote blooming until frost.

Shrubs and trees

- Fall is a good time to select and plant trees and shrubs. Fall planting encourages good root development, allowing the plants to get established before spring. If weather is dry, provide water up until the ground freezes.
- Stop fertilizing your trees and flowering shrubs to allow this years growth to harden off before winter.

Fruits and veggies

- Fruits and vegetables should be checked regularly for ripeness. A little practice and experience will tell you when your produce is at it's peak of flavor, and that is when it should be harvested.
- 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.
- After you have finished harvesting your summer vegetables, plant a cover crop of clovers, cow peas, soybeans, or vetches for the purpose of plowing under next spring.

Lawn

- When the fall rains arrive, fertilize your lawn with a slow-release 3-1-2 ratio fertilizer.
- September is one of the best months of the entire year for seeding or sodding new lawns.
- If the lawn needs de-thatching, it can be done during the early fall.
- Over seed old lawns with fresh seed to help fill in the bare spots and crowd out weeds and mosses.

House Plants

- 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.
- Begin conditioning your Poinsettias and Christmas cactus to get them ready for the holidays. Both Poinsettias must be kept at about 65 to 70 degrees; cactus, 50-60 degrees, and both placed in total darkness for 6 weeks, 14 hours a day. Afterward, they need 4 hours of direct sun, or 10 hours of bright light. Apply 0-10-10 fertilizer this month and next to develop flower buds; then feed every 2 weeks with a high nitrogen fertilizer once color has begun to show.

Odds and ends

- 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.
- One last effort at weeding will help to improve the appearance of your garden throughout the winter.
- The birds will soon begin their winter migrations. Give them a helping hand by providing them with some food for their long journey.
- Continue to watch for insect, slug and snail, or disease damage throughout the garden, and take the necessary steps to control the problem.

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