

Eastern Shore Virginia Master Gardeners

November Gardening Tips

By Sharon Wills, Master Gardener

Things I like about the Shore in November: Kids playing football in the streets, crisp mornings when steam rises off the water around the boats at Hopkins Store, a hot cup of tea in the afternoon with a good book, Johnny jump-ups and pansies.

Vegetables

Storing fruits & veggies - Be sure not to store apples or pears with vegetables. The fruits give off ethylene gas, which speeds up the breakdown of vegetables and causes them to develop off flavors.

An attractive autumn basket - combine various squashes such as pumpkins, butternut, acorn or gourds with fall leaves.

Trees, Shrubs and Groundcovers

Natural ornaments - pine cones, sweet gum balls, and seedpods of various plants such as redbud and milkweed add a beautiful touch to holiday ornaments.

Windowbox decorations - insert evergreen branches into the soil; most will hold their needles until spring. Add holly branches, bittersweet and strawflowers for color.

Watering – send trees and shrubs into winter with at least 1 inch of water a week until freezing weather occurs.

No blooms on wisteria? - fertilize after all leaves have fallen off to avoid excessive top growth and lack of blossoms.

Bagworm patrol - keep inspecting trees and shrubs for bagworm capsules and silvery egg masses of tent caterpillars. Remove and destroy them.

Azalea root protection - protect the roots of azaleas and rhododendrons by applying organic materials such as oak leaves or pine needles.

Dormant oil - spray dormant oil or volk oil on fruit and deciduous trees, shrubs and bushes. This kills overwintering insects like scales, mites, red spiders, gypsy moth and tent caterpillars. Dormant spraying should be done in the late fall and again early in the spring before budding occurs.

Perennials, Annuals, Bulbs

Spent perennials - cut back perennials to within 3 - 4 inches of the ground. Mulch lightly.

Bulbs - plant them now. Don't wait any longer. We still are having great fall weather. Even voles won't eat daffodils because they are poisonous, so try planting some daffodils around your other bulbs to protect them.

Bulbs in pots - small bulbs grow best in pots when crowded but not touching each other or the pot.

Container plants - move all container plants to a protected area or indoors. The containers do

not provide any protection from freezing weather. Before moving plants indoors, spray with a little dish soap in water to remove any unwanted travelers.

Chrysanthemums - remove spent flower stalks to help insure that the plants will send out vigorous sprouts in the spring. Don't divide them until spring.

Take a walk - walk around your garden with your garden notebook and make notes on what you need to change or add in the spring. Think about blooms, leaf color and texture, height, etc. Enjoy your garden before it goes to sleep for the winter.

Christmas indoor blooms - plant paperwhite narcissus bulbs in 2" of stones with water and put on windowsill. Keep watering. Bring in amaryllis bulbs now and plant lower half of the bulb in soil in small pots - no more than 1" around the bulb. You'll have beautiful paper whites and amaryllis blossoming by Christmas.

Geraniums - you can save them until spring: dig them up, shake off all the dirt from the roots, then hang each in a paper bag upside down in a cool dry place like an attic or garage. In spring, take them down, cut the dry foliage back to 8 or 10 inches, replant and water. They'll bloom bigger and better than before and you've saved the cost of new plants.

Fruits and Nuts

Plant a fruit tree - now is the perfect time to plant fruit trees. Visit any of our local nurseries -- they will help you select the varieties that grow well here on the Shore.

Remember to think about the height and width you have available. Dwarf fruit trees are most suitable for small gardens.

Raspberries - late fall and early spring are the times to plant raspberries. 'Heritage' variety grows best here. Now is the time to trim bramble fruits and blueberries. Raspberries and blackberries produce on new or first year canes, so it's important to cut back the old ones. Cut canes back to within an inch of the ground, especially any containing suckers. If bushes are extremely dense, take them back to six or eight canes, which will increase berry production.

Herbs

Potted herbs - pot up some herb plants or seeds to grow in the kitchen. The fragrance is lovely, they look good, and they add fresh tastes to your cooking.

Christmas wreath - sew together onions, garlic and chilis to make a great wreath for friends who cook.

Plant of the Month: Common Witch Hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana* - a Virginia native plant. Fall bloom with fragrant 1 inch crinkly yellow flowers. Bright golden yellow fall leaf color. A tall, upright spreading shrub or small tree depending on pruning. Ideal for wild gardens or under large shade trees. Deciduous. Full sun to part shade. Slow to moderate growth 15 to 30 feet tall, 15 to 25 feet wide.



ROSES

By Chuck Belensky, Master Gardener and Rosarian

If you were diligent with watering, feeding and spraying, your rose bushes should still be rewarding you with some great blooms. In fact, the colors can seem even more vivid at this time of the year.

Continue with your spray program through the end of this month, and water if necessary, but it is definitely not the time to fertilize. Cut whatever blooms you need for indoors, but minimize deadheading and pruning in general. It's time for the bushes to start the hardening up process in preparation for winter. Later in the month or in December, however, it would be a good idea to cut back any long, whipping canes to three or four feet to keep them from loosening the soil around their roots on windy days.

This is not a bad time to assess which roses you want to keep and which you might want to replace. This year's catalogs are starting to arrive, and some of the new varieties are very tempting. Unless you're willing to dig more rose beds, consider shovel-pruning some of the "dogs" and "blackspot magnets" that have been hanging around too long. An occasional pretty bloom doesn't justify a bush that spreads diseases to the rest of your roses or one that underperforms in general yet requires your time and money to keep going. Of course, this may have to be tempered by sentimentality when it comes to Grandma's old-fashioned favorite!

For the latest growing tips and advice, pictures and comments on the newest varieties and great rose articles in general, visit the web site of the American Rose Society (<http://www.ars.org/>). Also, their monthly magazine along with membership would make a great Christmas present for the rose grower in your family.