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The Grapevine

Fall Garden Care

Cooler temperatures should arrive later this week, and our first frost date is quickly approaching. Fall is an excellent time to start some gardening projects that are often hard to do in the spring. Once you pull your vegetables out of the garden for the year, incorporate some organic material into the soil. It's common to add organic material in the spring; however, a fall application has several benefits. With the leaves falling from the trees, we have a ready supply of organic material to add to the garden, and the second benefit is that winter will give the organic material time to break down in the soil. Hence, the nutrients are ready for your garden to use next year.

It's also a great idea to till your garden or work it up in the fall or early winter instead of tilling in the spring. Most years, fall weather is drier than early spring, plus you aren't on a time crunch trying to get your garden ready before you plant vegetables in the spring. Soil that is worked up when it is dry or just slightly damp is easier to till and is less likely to have large clods, which can easily happen when the soil is wet. If you decide to plant a cover crop, be sure to wait to work the soil till the cover crop has been killed by a frost for the season to get the most significant impact on your soil health.

Another task that can easily happen in the fall is to do a soil test in your garden, lawn, or flower beds, as this allows you to add any necessary nutrients or soil amendments before you plant in the garden in the spring. Typically, the soil lab is less busy in the fall, so the results return faster. Plus, you aren't impatiently waiting for your results, so you can start planting.

Fall is an often-forgotten time of the gardening year, as many of us are ready to be done with the work by the time late fall or early winter shows up, but it can also be an extremely valuable time to get a head start on next year's garden. Happy Growing!

Fall Lawn Care

Fall is an excellent time of the year to control weeds in your lawn. Next year's dandelions have germinated, and right now, all weeds are moving nutrients into their roots to help them make it through the long winter, which means broadleaf herbicides will also be taken to the roots. These young plants are small and easily controlled with herbicides such as 2,4-D or combination products (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed-Out) that contain 2,4-D, MCPP, and Dicamba. Choose a day with temperatures of 50 degrees or higher, as the better the weed grows, the more weed killer will be moved from the leaves to the roots. Cold temperatures will slow this process, but these products will still work at lower temperatures. The best way to prevent weeds in your lawn is to have a thick, healthy stand of grass, but that is a conversation for a different time. It is impossible to control 100% of lawn weeds, which is OK!



As we prepare to mow the yard for what is hopefully one of the last times of the year, it's time to think about preparing your lawn mower for its long winter break. Be sure to drain the gasoline from gas-powered engines or use a gasoline stabilizer to prevent the gas from becoming thick and gummy. Check your spark plug or replace it so you are ready to mow in the spring. If you have a riding lawn mower or one with a battery, remove the battery and clean the terminals to prevent corrosion.



Once you have serviced the engine, be sure to check the blades. Dull blades can damage the grass when you cut it and leave a "feathered" look on the ends of the grass blades. As you sharpen the blades, check for damage; if you can't smooth it out, the blades must be replaced. Grind or file the edge of the blade till it is about 1/32 inch, as a razor-sharp edge can lead to a poor cut. Clean the blades and the underside of the mower to remove any matted grass.

If you seeded your yard this fall, continue to water it to keep the seedlings growing and ensure they are more likely to survive the winter. If it continues to rain, a mature lawn won't

need much water, but we want to ensure the lawn goes into the winter with moist soil.

Take Away:

- Apply lawn herbicides as little as possible each year.
- A one-time fall application will be most effective at controlling perennial weeds.
- Spraying: Wear Boots! Wear Long Sleeves! Wear Gloves! Back AWAY from the application area – DON'T walk INTO it! READ THE LABEL! UNDERSTAND THE LABEL.
- Be sure to service your lawn mower so it's ready to go in the spring.
- Water your lawn as needed so the soil is moist in winter.

While we have passed the most important time to fertilize your cool-season lawn, you can still fertilize in November to help your lawn recover from the heat of the summer and any disease or insect your lawn might

have encountered. The best defense against weeds is a healthy, vigorous lawn, and your ideal lawn starts the fall before next year's growing season.

Question of the Week-Spanish Needles



This week's question is a weed I have also been fighting against in my yard and garden. Spanish needles, or *Bidens bipinnata*, also often known as beggar's tick, is a native plant of our area. While this plant is excellent for pollinators, the seeds leave a bit to be desired. The common name refers to the barbed awns that penetrate clothing and fur. They are often impossible to get out of some clothing. This upright herbaceous summer annual may grow three to five feet tall with an equal spread. Initially, the serrate, elliptic leaves are simple but become odd pinnately compound. In my garden and yard, I have been pulling this weed out of my flower beds and garden areas, which had been neglected before we purchased the house. Spanish needles will grow in various habitats, particularly disturbed areas, wetlands, grasslands, roadsides, ditches, and agricultural production areas. Once established, they can handle droughty conditions well and reseed profusely. Blooms are highly visited by many pollinators and butterflies, even though flowers are self-pollinating. Spanish needles are also a larval host plant for the dainty sulphur, *Nathalis iole*. There are several different members of the *Biden spp*, but they have larger seeds, and the leaves have more pinnately compound leaflets.

There are several methods of control for Spanish needles. The first option is to pull the plants every time you see them. This annual doesn't regrow from roots, so mechanical control by pulling or using a hoe is easy. If you have a larger area, you can use chemicals to control it. Most broadleaf weed killers will be effective at controlling Spanish needles. In bare areas, you can also use glyphosphate to control; however, this chemical is not recommended in places surrounded by other desirable plants.



Video of the Week- Shrubs that Thrive in Kansas

Picking the right plant for the right place is crucial for plants that will last in our challenging Kansas climate. Learn the best shrub varieties suited for the state's unique climate challenges, including heat and drought tolerance, as our speaker highlights some great shrubs to incorporate into your landscape. Watch the video on the [Kansas Garden Hour website](#).

Upcoming Events

November 5th- Climate Resilient Gardens

December 3rd- Gifts for Gardeners

Upcoming Events:

October 8th at 12:15 pm-
Woody Plant Propagation at the Andover Library

October 20th at 12:15 pm-
Bringing Color with Bulbs at Lori's EmporiYum

October Garden Calendar

Vegetables and Fruits

- Plant garlic cloves for next summer's harvest
- After a light frost, dig sweet potatoes and cure for two weeks in a warm location. Store in a cool, dry location for longer keeping.
- Harvest peanuts and roast for a homegrown snack
- Pick pumpkins and winter squash. Keep in a warm area for a couple of weeks, then store in a cool, dry location
- Till the garden at the end of the season and add organic matter such as compost or manure
- Make notes of successes and failures in the garden for next year
- Continue to harvest apples
- Remove hulls from black walnuts to retain the color of the kernels
- Pick up and discard fallen fruit to reduce disease next year.

Flowers

- Plant spring flowering bulbs, tulips, daffodils, and others
- Remove dead annuals from the garden
- Trim perennial stalks to tidy the garden for winter
- Pot bulbs for indoor forcing
- Clean up the dead iris and peony foliage and destroy it to decrease the spread of disease
- After a light frost, dig canna, gladiolus, dahlias, and other tender bulbs for winter storage

Lawns

- Continue to mow the lawn if necessary
- Core aerate tuft to reduce soil compaction, improve drainage, break up thatch, and help nutrients move into the soil
- Control dandelions, henbit, and chickweed with a broadleaf herbicide when seedlings are young
- Sharpen the mower blade for a clean cut
- Check the oil level in your mower
- Keep fallen leaves removed from the lawn to prevent shading and dieback of grass

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant trees and shrubs, deciduous and evergreen, and keep them watered
- Once the leaves have fallen, transplant trees and shrubs
- Trim dead, broken, or diseased branches from trees and shrubs
- Enjoy fall leaf color, which typically hits peak about the third week of October

Miscellaneous

- Drain and store garden hoses and sprinklers for winter
- Prepare the compost for winter. Add new materials and turn
- Store unused seeds in a cool, dry location



LUNCH & LEARN

Bring your lunch and join Horticulture Agent, Calla Edwards, over the lunch hour during our monthly Lunch & Learn Program. This will be held over the lunch hour and will cover a variety of horticulture topics.

October 8th
12:15-12:45 p.m.

Andover Public Library
1511 E Central Ave
Andover, KS

October Topic:
Woody Plant Propagation

Vegetative propagation, cloning, and asexual propagation are all terms used to describe the process of making new plants that are genetically identical to your existing plants. Learn about the basics of plant propagation for the hobby gardener. With a little knowledge and some simple tools, learn how to be successful in propagating your plants.

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October 20th
12:15-12:45 p.m.

Lori's EMPORIUM!
1604 Custer Lane
Augusta, KS

October Topic:
Bringing Beauty with Bulbs

Nothing says "Hello Spring" like the cheery smile of a bright yellow daffodil or a bed of colorful tulips. This spring welcome does not just happen, it must be planned. Fall is the ideal time to plant spring flower bulbs in the landscape. Calla will cover everything you need to know to have success with spring-flowering bulbs.

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