

September Garden Guide

* Plant peonies now, but make sure the crowns are buried only one and a half to two inches below ground level. Planting them deeper than two inches may keep them from blooming.

* Root cuttings from annual bedding plants such as begonias, coleus, geraniums and impatiens. These plants can be overwintered in a sunny window and provide plants for next year's garden.

* Before the first frost dig up caladiums. Allow them to dry and store them in a dry place for the winter.

* Perennial phlox can be divided about every third or fourth year. Divide big clumps of perennial phlox into thirds. Early fall or early spring are the best times to plant or transplant them.

* Divide lily-of-the-valley.

* Select accent plants for your landscape that will provide autumn colors. Trees that have red fall color are flowering dogwood, red maple, sugar maple, Norway maple, red oak and scarlet oak. Shrubs with red fall foliage include sumac, viburnum, winged euonymus and barberry.

* Allow plants to finish the summer growth cycle in a normal manner. Never encourage growth with heavy applications of fertilizer or excessive pruning at this time. Plants will delay their dormancy process that has already begun in anticipation of winter in the months ahead. New growth can be injured by an early freeze.

* Tree wound paints used after pruning are no longer recommended as they can slow healing and may promote decay.

* If pesky seedlings of woody plants, such as elm, mulberry hackberry or maple are found growing in your yard, remove them as soon as possible. If left too long they will take over gardens and other landscape plantings.

* Rake up leaves, twigs and fruit from crabapple trees and dispose of them in the trash to help control apple scab disease.

* Water newly planted trees and shrubs to provide sufficient moisture and prevent winter damage. Add a three inch layer of organic mulch such as shredded bark around the base of plants to retain soil moisture and regulate soil temperature.

* Wood ashes contain phosphorous, potassium and calcium. It can be placed on vegetable gardens and flower beds.

- * Save seeds from favorite self-pollinating, non-hybrid flowers such as marigolds by allowing the flower heads to mature. Lay seeds on newspaper and turn them often to dry. Store the dry seeds in glass jars or envelopes in a cool, dry, dark place.
- * Hot peppers will keep best if stored after they are dry. Thread the peppers on a string to dry. Hang in a cool, dry place.
- * Pot up chives, parsley and other herbs to extend the growing season in the house.
- * Pears should be picked at the hard ripe stage and allowed to finish ripening off the tree. The base color of yellow pears should change from green to yellow as the fruit approaches maturity.
- * Be sure to keep strawberry beds weed free. Every weed you pull now will help make weeding much easier next spring.
- * Do not wait for frost warnings to move your plants indoors. Temperatures of 45 degrees Fahrenheit or lower can damage many tropical house plants.
- * Collect okra seed pods, gourds, sumac seed heads, rose hips and other suitable materials for dried arrangements. Air dry these materials in a dark, cool location.
- * Fall is a good time for improving your garden soil. Add manure, compost and leaves to increase the organic matter content.