

The September HORT REPORT

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

- The last nitrogen fertilizer application of the year should be applied no later than September 15, on warm-season grasses.
- Brown patch disease of cool-season grasses can still be a problem.
- Meet water requirements of turf.
- Continue Bermuda grass spray program with glyphosate products for areas being converted to tall fescue this fall.
- White grub damage can become visible this month. Apply appropriate soil insecticide if white grubs are a problem. Water product into soil.
- Pre-emergent applications for winter-annual weed control should be completed by the 2nd week of September. *NOTE: DO NOT TREAT AREAS THAT WILL BE SEEDED IN THE FALL.
- PLANT bluegrass, fescue, or ryegrass seed as needed in shady areas in LATE September through MID-OCTOBER. Fall is the best time to establish cool-season lawns.
- Choose spring flowering bulbs as soon as they become available... **SPRING BULBS ARE ON THEIR WAY!!!** Watch our Facebook and website... we will let you know as soon as they arrive!

HOW'S YOUR GARDEN?

It is still planting time for a few fall crops. Try lettuce, spinach, radish, kale, turnips, beets, and I even have a fall pea if you're game! We should be getting ONION BULBS and GARLIC for FALL PLANTING around in mid-September. If you are interested, I'm taking names and phone numbers and will call you to let you know when they arrive... just call (405) 262-3456 and add your name to the list today!

FINISHED FOR THE SEASON? THINK AGAIN...

It is about time to PLANT FALL COVER CROPS. COVER CROPS are fast growing plants, usually grains, legumes, or grasses, that are utilized by farmers and gardeners for one or more of their beneficial qualities. They are not intended to be planted as food crops. Cover crops are usually worked into the soil and many of their benefits are realized in concert with each other.

There are many BENEFITS to planting COVER CROPS:

- **ABOVE GROUND WEED CONTROL:** Because of their fast-growing nature, cover crops are often able to suppress weeds.
- **DISEASE/PEST CONTROL:** Cover crops displace disease organisms by replacing their preferred host. Weeds often harbor insects that prey on the garden. By suppressing weed growth with cover crops, you can suppress pest and insect populations as well.
- **SOIL FLORA AND FAUNA:** The best-known benefit of cover crops might be their effects on soil. Cover crops decay and leave behind organic matter that acts as a food source for earthworms and other beneficial soil microorganisms. Increased diversity of soil life=healthier plants.
- **PHYSICAL BENEFITS:** Cover crops are grown to improve the physical characteristics of the soil. Crops like buckwheat, oats, and crimson clover have very fine roots that can

penetrate tough soils. They loosen the hard soil as they penetrate and when the roots die, they leave behind looser soil and organic matter.

- **NUTRIENTS:** Cover crops are often referred to as “Green Manure” because they add organic matter to the soil and increase its fertility. The humus that they add to the soil helps hold nitrogen for plants to utilize and prevents it from leaching away. Crops like WINTER PEAS can take nitrogen from the air and turn it into a form that plants can use as food. Others, like BUCKWHEAT, are adept at gathering phosphorus from the soil and making it available to other plants upon decomposition. These two nutrients, NITROGEN AND PHOSPHORUS, are major contributors to plant health and production and are also often added as fertilizer. Therefore, cover crops can reduce or eliminate the need to add fertilizer.
- **NATURAL CHOICE:** Cover crops are used in many areas after fall harvest to enrich the soil and prevent erosion. But they can be used any time of the year. It seems that for any problem in the garden, there is a cover crop solution. Come in today and let me show you the way to better garden performance with less input of extra water, fertilizer, and insecticides. Cover crops are the NATURAL choice for garden improvement.
- **MY THREE FAVORITE COVER CROPS:** Austrian Winter Peas, Buckwheat, and a Crimson Clover Combo!

COMMON GARDENING TERMS

In our August newsletter we went over common gardening terms beginning with A-C. Here is the second go to help you understand some additional, “Common Gardening Terms”.

This month we will cover D-F ...hope it helps!

- **DAYS TO EMERGE:** Number of days, on average, that it will take a seedling to emerge from the soil, or medium, in favorable conditions.
- **DAYS TO HARVEST:** Number of days from sowing (or transplant) to harvest.
- **DEADHEADING:** Cutting spent flowers off a plant, encouraging the plant to bloom again. Deadheading extends the bloom period.
- **DETERMINATE:** Describes tomatoes that stop growing when fruit begins forming from the topmost flower bud, making them more compact at around 3–4 feet. Most of the crop ripens within a couple of weeks-time, making these a great choice for canning.
- **DIRECT SOW:** Sowing seeds directly in their permanent growing space.
- **DISEASE RESISTANCE:** Exhibiting less susceptibility or immunity against specific diseases, as compared to other varieties.
- **DISEASE TOLERANCE:** Ability to thrive with the stress of infection, as compared to other varieties.
- **DROUGHT TOLERANT:** Ability to survive or thrive in low-water conditions. Also known as “water-wise”.
- **ETIOLATION:** Characterized by lanky, weak, or pale plant growth, resulting from planting conditions that allowed only low or no light.
- **FAIRLY DROUGHT TOLERANT:** Ability to survive or thrive in low-water conditions, but to a lesser extent than “drought tolerant” plants.
- **FROST TOLERANT CROPS:** Crops that tolerate some cool weather and even frost, although the amount of tolerance varies between crops and even varieties.
- **FROST SENSITIVE CROPS:** Crops that are not frost tolerant and will die if exposed to freezing temperatures.
- **FRUIT:** A seed capsule that emerges from a flower, such as a tomato or melon.
- **FULL SUN:** Six (6) or more hours of direct sunlight, per day.

PANSY INFORMATION

Pansies are known to prefer cool temperatures with thick layers of sunshine. In our area (Zone 7), these easy-care, colorful flowers do best in fall, winter, and spring. The heat of the summer is the culprit here. These tough plants are grown as an annual here in Oklahoma. The newer pansy varieties can survive temperatures down to the single digits. They can FREEZE SOLID, and then go on to re-bloom in early spring. Pansies come in many colors, and they are absolutely THE perfect pick-me-up during the worst part of winter. When I can see them bloom through the ice and snow, I know by then, spring is right around the corner. If you are new to fall pansies, come in and visit with us. We will show you the beauty of these colorful little gems!

HARDY MUMS... A BEAUTIFUL FALL TRADITION

I love the way residents and businesses create colorful entrances with straw bales, pumpkins, and hardy mums. They come in a rainbow of fall color hues and most people don't realize it, but these are hardy perennials that shouldn't be discarded after the season is over. These great plants can be placed in the ground to repeat their show each autumn if you wish.

Mums, or CHRYSANTHEMUMS, are significant in many cultures around the world. In some parts of the world, they are known as a funeral flower, but in the U.S. the Chrysanthemum is a symbol of a celebration of harvest and Thanksgiving.

CHOOSING THE BEST MUMS for your display isn't hard. Although we are tempted to pick the containers in full, glorious bloom, it is much better to select plants where all the flowers are just starting to open. This gives you a longer lasting display since the containers at peak will fade shortly. Treat the container mums like any other potted plant in your collection. Make sure they have ample water and plenty of sunshine. If they are situated in the shade, the blossoms will open, but not with the same numbers as those placed in full sun.

Once the show is over and the flowers fade, you can incorporate the plants into your perennial beds. Transplant them as you would any other perennial, making sure to untangle the roots and place into moderately fertile soil in full sun. Remember... if they are planted too close to streetlights or other artificial lighting, that can impact the flowering schedule. The soil shouldn't dry out, but remember, mums hate wet feet so good drainage is essential. When the frost kills the tops back, you can trim the dead foliage and mulch lightly. Come spring when the new shoots appear, dress with OSMOCOTE fertilizer (14-14-14) to ensure healthy growth. Once the plants are about 6 inches tall, pinch the growing tips to encourage branching. Do this every 6-weeks, until the end of June, to allow the flower buds to form.