

The September
HORT REPORT
Helpful tips from
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LAWN & TURF:

- Last nitrogen fertilizer application of the year on warm season grass should be applied no later than September 15.
- Winter broadleaf weeds like dandelion will begin to emerge in late September which is also a good time to control them with 2-4-D type herbicide.
- If pre-emergent control of winter weeds (Henbit, Chickweed, Annual Bluegrass, etc.) is desired in lawns, the application should be completed by the second week of September.
- ****NOTE ... DO NOT TREAT AREAS THAT WILL BE SEEDED IN THE FALL.**
- Continue Bermuda grass spray program with Glyphosate products for areas being converted to tall fescue this fall.
- Plan to seed Bluegrass, Fescue or Ryegrass as needed in shady areas in mid-to-late September. Fall is the best time to establish cool-season lawns.
- White grub damage can become visible this month. Apply appropriate soil insecticide if white grubs are a problem.
- Meet water requirements of turf.

VEGETABLES:

- You have all of September to plant cool-season vegetables like spinach, leaf lettuce, mustard, and radishes and until the middle of September to plant rutabagas, swiss chard, garlic, onions, and turnips.
- If your vegetable garden is over for the season, I recommend a fall cover crop to help amend the soil with a natural nitrogen fix.
- Raising Austrian Winter Peas, Buckwheat, and Crimson Clover or a mixture of all three over the winter months to be tilled under in mid-February.

GENERAL LANDSCAPE:

- Watch for fall specials at garden centers and nurseries since fall is a great time for planting many ornamentals.

- Choose spring flowering bulbs as soon as available.
- Plant cool-season annuals like pansies, ornamental cabbage or kale, snapdragons, dianthus, and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.
- Watch for and control any late infestations of tree webworms.
- Begin to reduce the amount of light on outside tropical houseplants by placing them under shade trees before bringing them indoors for the winter.

AUTUMN BEGINS SEPTEMBER 22!

AUTUMN LEAVES... DON'T BAG IT!

- Bagging or burning leaves are two methods of leaf disposal. These methods no longer fit today's environmental needs. Sending bagged leaves to the landfill uses precious space, and burning leaves contributes to air pollution and the risk of wildfires. Composting is the best way to deal with your fall tree leaves and produces a rich source of organic matter for your gardens.
- Leaves can be easily composted at home. A compost pile is built by layering organic materials. Compost piles should be 3-4 feet high. This volume is large enough to allow the pile to heat as composting occurs and small enough to allow for easy turning. You can build bins for composting, but a simple pile works well.
- FIRST LAYER: 3-4 inches of dried organic matter, such as leaves or dried grass.
- SECOND LAYER: 3-4 inches of green material such as kitchen vegetable scraps, grass clippings or green plant material.
- THIRD LAYER: 1-2 inches of manure OR 1 cup fertilizer containing nitrogen.
- FOURTH LAYER: 1 inch of soil to add microbes to the pile OR a commercial compost starter.
- DO NOT ADD: Pet manure, meat scraps, fat, bones, diseased plants, or noxious weeds to the compost pile.

USING COMPOST:

- Compost improves soil tilth, especially for clay soils. Mixing compost into the soil improves aeration, water drainage, water retention, and overall plant health.
- Mulching with 2-3 inches of compost reduces soil moisture loss, cools the soil and reduces weed problems.
- Using your autumn leaves in your landscape beds as mulch provides habitat for beneficial insects and micro-organisms. Run them over with a lawn mower to chop them into little pieces to provide valuable nutrients and aid in moisture retention in your landscape.
- If you were maintaining a vegetable garden, you should incorporate them into the soil. By next spring they will have de-composed, adding rich organic matter for next year's crop.

LET'S PLANT A COVER CROP:

- Whether your vegetable garden is in ground OR raised beds, planting a cover crop has taken place since ancient times by farmers and gardeners for one or more of their beneficial qualities and NOT usually intended as food crops. Over 2500 years ago, the ancient Japanese and Chinese noticed that many crops grew and produced better when following the growth of certain plants. This practice continued with the ancient Greeks and Romans and continues up to present. Cover crops have a number of specific uses and many benefits are realized in concert with each other.

ABOVE GROUND WEED CONTROL...

- Weed control is one of the many benefits realized by cover cropping. Because of their fast-growing nature, cover crops are often able to out-compete weeds for resources like water, light, and nutrients. In some cases, this competition suppresses weeds to a manageable level. In other cases, it stops weed growth all together. When used in this manner they are referred to as "Smother Crops".

DISEASE/PEST CONTROL...

- Sowing cover crops can also be an effective step in disease and pest prevention and control. When used as part of a healthy crop rotation, cover crop plants displace disease organisms by replacing their preferred hosts. The same can be said for their ability to prevent insect pests. Weeds often harbor insects that prey upon garden plants. By suppressing weed growth, cover crops can suppress.

IN THE SOIL... FLORA & FAUNA...

- Some of the best-known benefits of cover crops are their effects on the soil. When cover crops decay and leave behind organic matter, they act as a food source for earthworms and beneficial soil microorganism. Increased diversity of soil life usually leads to healthier plants.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS...

- Cover crops are often grown to improve the physical characteristics of the soil. Many cover crops like Buckwheat, Winter Peas and Crimson Clover have very fine roots that can penetrate tough soils. They loosen the hard soil when they penetrate and when the roots die, they leave behind looser soil.
- Many times, cover crops are planted in the fall and left for winter. The mat of plants that are left behind help hold the soil in place and protect it from the ravages of winter and early spring weather. Their above ground parts, alive or dead, help hold snow and rain and allow it to penetrate more evenly, preventing excessive runoff and erosion. When cover crops are incorporated onto the soil, their decay provides organic matter that lightens the soil, improves its texture and aeration, and can equilibrate its water holding capacity.

NUTRIENT EFFECTS...

- Cover Crops are often referred to as "Green Manures". This is because like manure, they add organic matter to the soil. But, also like manure, they can increase the fertility of the soil. The humus that they add to the soil helps hold nitrogen for plants to utilize and prevents it from leaching away. Some cover crops are legumes, like peas, have the ability too, with the help from the soil microorganisms called Rhizobium, 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 their decomposition. These two nutrients, NITROGEN & 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.

TIPS...

- Cover crops are used in many areas after fall harvest and clean up to benefit the soil and prevent erosion. They can be used any time of the year. There are numerous reasons to choose cover crops as a part of a healthy garden. It seems that for most any problem, there is a cover crop solution. Try one and you will notice over time how much better your garden performs with less input of extra water, fertilizer, and insecticide. Cover crops are the natural choice for a naturally better garden.

FAVORITE COVER CROPS FOR OUR AREA:

- A COMBINATION OF ALL THREE... Austrian Winter Pea, Buckwheat, Crimson Clover

AUSTRIAN WINTER PEA...

- PLANT IN FULL SUN
- 56 days
- SOW IN FALL/SPRING



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- *A dynamic easy to grow pea that improves your garden's soil fertility and structure by adding nitrogen to the soil.

CRIMSON CLOVER...

- PLANT IN FULL SUN
- 90-100 days
- SOW IN FALL/SPRING



- *A hardworking cover crop for your vegetable garden that fixes nitrogen for improved soil fertility. The large eye-catching, deep crimson flowers are beautiful and attract beneficial insects.

COMMON BUCKWHEAT...

- PLANT IN FULL SUN
- 30-40 days
- SOW IN FALL/SPRING



- *In just a few weeks grow your own green manure for a healthier soil that is more productive. Great for controlling annual and perennial weeds. So easy to grow... so good for the soil!

GOOD CRITTER? ...BAD CRITTER?

- Meet the Camel Cricket or "Spricket"



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- Looks like a spider and has the legs of a cricket. They are light tan or brown in color, about 1 – 1 ¼ inches long, and they do not have wings.
- Camel crickets do not have the ability to make sounds like their cousins the common field cricket.
- You will most likely find them inside in moist, dark, and damp environments like garages and basements. Outside they can invade storage buildings, under stones and in stacks of firewood. They often become a problem when we have extremes in weather conditions such as excessive rainfall or extended periods of hot dry weather. Although they are mostly a nuisance pest, they can damage stored items, such as garments and linens packed in boxes in a garage or basement.

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL METHODS...

- Caulk or seal gaps and openings around window frames, doors, foundations and clothes dryer vents, crawl space access doors, as well as where heating/AC and plumbing lines pass through the foundation.
- Install weather-stripping along the bottom of the house and garage doors so that it fits tightly against the threshold.
- Stack boxes and other items off the ground and away from the walls in a garage or storage building.
- Reduce moisture indoors, as well as in other critical areas such as basements or crawl spaces.
- DO NOT stack firewood against the house.
- Keep ground cover and mulch at least 12 inches away from the foundation. When possible, use an inorganic cover such as gravel up near the foundation.
- Place sticky boards, such as those used for cockroaches and mice, in corners and behind appliances to catch crickets that enter your home.
- If all else falls ... call the exterminator.

CHEMICAL CONTROL METHODS...

- **OUTDOORS:** Any chemical control should focus first on outdoor barrier treatments. Sprays applied to foundations walls, around vents, crawl space

accesses, basement doors and windows, and insecticidal baits applied along the perimeter can be quite effective unless there are heavy rains.

- **INDOORS:** Any common household (indoor) insecticides can be applied to baseboards and areas behind appliances.

HAPPY FALL GARDENING YA'LL!