

The November
HORT REPORT
Helpful tips from
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LAWN & TURF:

- Fertilize cool-season grasses like fescue with 1 lb. nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft.
- Continue to mow fescue as needed at 2 inches and water during dry conditions.
- Control broadleaf winter weeds with a pre-emergent.
- Keep falling leaves off fescue to avoid damage to the foliage.

FRUITS & NUTS:

- Delay pruning fruit trees until next February or March before bud breaks.
- Harvest pecans and walnuts immediately to eliminate deterioration of the kernel.

GENERAL LANDSCAPE:

- Prune deciduous trees in early part of winter. Prune only for structural and safety purposes.
- Apply dormant oil for scale infested trees and shrubs before temperatures fall below 40 degrees. Follow label directions.
- Continue to plant balled, bur lapped, and containerized trees.
- Watch for arborvitae aphids, which tolerate cooler temperatures in evergreen shrubs.
- Tulips can still be planted successfully through the middle of November.
- Leave foliage on asparagus, mums, and other perennials to help insulate crowns from harsh winter conditions.
- Bulbs like hyacinth, narcissus, and tulips can be potted in containers for indoor forcing.
- Left over garden seeds can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer until next planting season. Discard seeds over 3 years old.
- Gather and shred leaves to compost and use as mulch or till into garden plots.

- Clean and store garden and landscape tools. Coat with a light application of oil to prevent rusting. Drain fuel tanks, irrigation lines and hoses. Bring hoses indoors.

BULBS & BEES:

Bulbs & Bees




What bulbs best attract bees and pollinators to a garden? Bees are trichromatic and base their colors on ultraviolet light, blue, and green. As a result, bees cannot see the color red. Our suggestion would be to plant blue and purple flowers. Gardeners will do best when planting larger areas, however, combinations of alliums, hyacinth, muscari, and crocus will be effective. Chionodoxa, wood hyacinth, and scilla are also bee favorites that are typically deer and rabbit resistant. Galanthus and other white flowers are also popular with honeybees and bumblebees and offer contrast to blues and purples. Once bees begin to visit, they will return, providing pollination throughout the summer, and subsequent years.

WHY DO LEAVES CHANGE COLOR?

This year we've learned that almost nothing is guaranteed in life. And yet, as summer turns to autumn, one thing that IS certain is that leaves will be changing color. Why do leaves change color? And how do the leaves decide which fiery color to turn? Ed Sharron, a science communication specialist with the National Park Services, explains the science behind the beautiful colors of fall.



WHY DO LEAVES TURN RED?

The more favorable warm, sunny day/cool night temperature cycles that occur in early autumn, the more likely that fall season is to experience vibrant colors with lots of reds. Leaves that get the most sunlight will develop red, as the sugars inside them are “baked” into the red anthocyanin pigments. This is the same process that causes many apples to only be red on the side facing the sun as they grow.

WHY DON'T ALL LEAVES TURN RED?

Trees that don't receive as much sunlight will reveal the orange, yellow and brown colors, caused by the carotenoid and xanthophyll pigments that are already present in the leaves, but are hidden under the green until the chlorophyll breaks down.

WHEN DO LEAVES KNOW WHEN TO CALL IT QUITS?

The primary signal to trees is the length of day. Shorter days tell a tree it's time to stop photosynthesizing – the process by which sunlight and water combine to make food for the tree – and shut down for the winter.

WHY DO THEY TURN SPECTACULAR COLORS BEFORE THEY FALL OFF?

When photosynthesis shuts down, the chlorophyll in leaves that makes them appear green breaks down. What colors come next depend on the following:

- Relatively warm sunny days promote the creation of sugar within the leaves.
- Relatively cold, but not freezing, nights act as a trigger, causing the tree to begin to slowly create a protective layer of corky cells called the “abscission layer” between a leaf’s stem and branch, which traps some of the sugars within the leaf.
- Sugars that escape being trapped in the leaf are stored in the tree trunk and roots and act as a kind of natural antifreeze that protects deciduous trees during winter.

WHY DO SOME LEAVES NOT CHANGE COLOR AND FALL OFF?

Trees that hold onto their leaves year-round – modified leaves called “needles” – are evergreens like Pine, Hemlock, Spruce, and Fir. They have evolved to potentially photosynthesize year-round, though at a much slower rate in the cold months, and only on relatively warmer winter days.

HOW WILL CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT FALL FOLIAGE?

As a result of a warming climate and shifting precipitation patterns, the fall foliage season as we know it is likely to change in the coming years and decades. Drought and extended warmth into fall will likely result in duller colors and possibly the leaves just turning brown and falling off before they change colors.

HARVESTING SUNFLOWER SEEDS

One of the pleasures of watching those huge yellow flowers following the summer sun is anticipating harvesting sunflower seeds in the fall. If you've done your homework and planted a sunflower variety with large, full heads, you are in for a treat, but beware; you won't be the only one harvesting sunflower seeds. Sunflower harvesting is a favorite pastime of birds, squirrels, field mice and deer. To beat the local wildlife, it is important to know when to harvest sunflowers.



WHEN TO HARVEST:

Harvesting sunflowers is easy, deciding when to harvest sunflowers can give some gardeners pause. Heads picked before the proper time may have plenty of seed coats with little meat. Wait too long to harvest and the tender seeds will be too dry to roast. Wait till the animals start harvesting and there will be nothing left for you!

- Harvest sunflowers when their petals become dry and begin to fall.
- The green base of the heads will turn yellow and eventually brown.
- Seeds will look plump and the seed coats will be fully black or will have black and white stripes depending on the variety.
- If animals or birds are a problem, you can cover the heads with fine netting.

HOW TO HARVEST:

One method for harvesting seeds allows the seeds to fully ripen on the stem.

- When seeds are fully ripened and just beginning to loosen from the head, cut the stem about 1 inch below the head.
- Briskly rub the seeds from the head with your hand, blow off the chaff, and allow the seeds to dry before storing.

The second method begins when about two-thirds of the seeds are mature.

- Cut a longer piece of stem, 3-4 inches works well.
- Wrap a paper bag around the head and hang heads in a well-ventilated area for a few weeks to dry. Make sure area is warm but not hot.

Sunflower harvesting has a long history as an American tradition, and they have been a part our diet for centuries. Native Americans were harvesting sunflower seeds long before Europeans arrived. They boiled the heads to extract the oil and ate the seeds either raw or baked in breads and infusions were used medicinally. The seeds are a good source of calcium, phosphorous and potassium. How you harvest is a matter of preference and neither method provides a greater yield.

SAVING SEEDS:

- Once the seeds are harvested, they may be used right away or saved for planting next season. Dry your seeds completely prior to storing them. The drier the seeds are, the longer they will store. Keep in closed container such as a sealed, airtight, mason jar. Don't forget to label and date the contents clearly.
- For seeds that will be stored for only a season, place the container in a cool, dark location. The refrigerator is a great place to store seeds. To help ensure the seeds stay dry, you can also place a silica gel, or 2 tablespoons of dry powdered milk wrapped in tissue in the bottom of the jar. You can also freeze your seeds. Either place them into an airtight, freezer safe container or toss them into a freezer bag. Most seeds will last up to a year or more when stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

BIRD FEEDING TIPS:

HOLD ONTO GOURDS & PUMPKINS!!!

- After Halloween those porch decorations, gourds, and pumpkins, can feed the wildlife.
- Cut a hole in each pumpkin and set under a feeder. Squirrels and other creatures enjoy the flesh, and birds pick at the seeds inside!
- When cooking autumn dinners, save squash seeds – they're an excellent source of protein for birds. Just leave the seeds on a tray to dry for a day or two. In summer, try the same thing with melon seeds.

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Till next time...

HAPPY HALLOWEEN YA'LL!