Fall Garden Tips

A fall garden is open to attack by insects and diseases just as the summer garden. In some cases, the insect problems are worse. Worms (cabbage loopers and imported cabbage moths) are serious problems on fall cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and collards. Control these leaf-eating worms with one of the biological sprays. You also have to watch out for squash bugs. They are troublesome on fall squash and pumpkins.

Fall vegetables need fertilizer just as much as spring and summer vegetables. Don’t count on the fertilizer applied in spring to supply fertilizer needs of vegetables planted in late summer and fall. Fertilize before planting and side-dress as needed.

As the danger of frost approaches, pay close attention to weather predictions. Tender plants often can be protected from an early frost and continue to produce for several weeks. When a killing frost is inevitable, harvest tender vegetables.

Do you have tomatoes that are not ripe and it is going to freeze? Green tomatoes that are turning white just before turning pink will ripen if stored in a cool place. Pick these tomatoes, wrap them in paper, and use them as they ripen.

Don’t abandon the garden when freezing temperatures kill the plants. Clean up the debris, store stakes and poles, take a soil test, and row up part of the garden to be ready for planting early spring Irish potatoes and English peas.
## Events for October 2019

### Forrest County Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pine Belt Master Gardener Fall Garden Day</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. at the Lamar County Multipurpose Center 43 Central Industrial Rd, Purvis, MS. This will include educational sessions about plant propagation, living wreaths, and promoting microbes. There will also be a plant sale, refreshments, and vendors on site. No RSVP needed. Call 601-794-3910 for more information.</td>
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### Hancock County Events

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hancock County Master Gardener Meeting</td>
<td>1:30 p.m. Hancock County Extension Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting Trees in the Home Landscape</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. Pass Christian Public Library. This program will include information on selection of fruit and ornamental trees for the home landscape, as well as information on best practices for planting and care of trees through their first year. Presenter is Dr. Christian Stephenson, Hancock County Extension Agent.</td>
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### Harrison County Events

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<tr>
<td>Hancock/Harrison Forestry and Wildlife Association monthly meeting</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. until Noon. Sherry’s Country Kitchen located at 20180 Highway 53 in Gulfport, MS. All Hancock/Harrison CFWA members are welcome to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Applicator Training</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. until 5 p.m. Harrison County Extension Office, 2315 17th Street, Gulfport, MS. This training is for those who own or lease property for agricultural purposes. $20 per individual. No preregistration necessary.</td>
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### Jackson County Events

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackson County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. at Ocean Springs Library. Robby Goff will give a presentation on Bees at 10:00 a.m., followed by the JCMG business meeting at 11:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Gardening Program</td>
<td>3:30 p.m. at Moss Point Library. Evan Ware will present tips to help the home gardener with transitioning gardens from fall to winter.</td>
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### Pearl River County Events

<table>
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<tr>
<td>46th Annual Ornamental Horticulture Field Day</td>
<td>Registration begins at 9:00 a.m., and the program begins at 9:30 a.m. South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville. There will be a registration fee of $10.00 ($6.50 for students) to cover the cost of lunch and refreshments. Research updates and horticultural presentations in the gardens will be featured in the morning and early afternoon. The South MS Branch Station is located at 711 W. North Street (across from Pearl River Community College). From the intersection of Highways 11 and 26, go ½ mile north on Highway 11 and then one block west on W. North Street. For questions, call (601) 795-4525.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Landscapes: Sustainable Home Landscaping</td>
<td>9:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. Crosby Arboretum, Picayune, MS. Learn wise maintenance and landscaping practices to conserve resources and energy and create eco-friendly home landscapes through reducing maintenance needs. Benefit local wildlife and strengthen biodiversity by incorporating native plant species, discover new methods for reducing stormwater impacts and conserving water, recycle yard waste, and learn how to work with your existing soil in this program with Pearl River County Extension Agent Dr. Eddie Smith. Reservations requested. Free to members; non-members $5. Call 601-799-2311 to register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl River County Master Gardener Meeting</td>
<td>After the conclusion of the Ornamental Horticulture Field Day in Poplarville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl River–Stone County Forestry Association Meeting</td>
<td>12:00 noon. The Sawmill Restaurant, 2205 Highway 49, Wiggins, MS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Applicator Training</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. until 12 p.m. Pearl River County Extension Office, 401 West Lamar Street, Poplarville, MS. This training is for those who own or lease property for agricultural purposes. $20 per individual. Call 601-403-2280 to register for the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl River–Stone County Forestry Association Meeting</td>
<td>12:00 noon. The Sawmill Restaurant, 2205 Highway 49, Wiggins, MS.</td>
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Garden Calendar: October

Plant
• Spring flowering bulbs should be planted this month, with the exception of tulips and hyacinths, which should be placed in the refrigerator for 6 weeks before being planted in late December or early January.
• Pot up Basil, Chives, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, and Sweet Marjoram for that sunny kitchen window.
• Annuals to plant are Pansies, Violas, Pinks, Flowering Cabbage and Kale, English Daisy, Wildflower planting, Cornflowers, Larkspur, and Queen's Anne Lace.
• Perennials to plant include: Asters, Salvia, Hollyhock, Daylilies, Babies Breath, Iris, Shasta Daisy, Peonies, and Phlox.
• Many evergreens may be planted this month.

Fertilize
• Test soil in garden to monitor balance of minerals.

Prune
• Remove damaged and dead wood from trees.
• Pick blossom-like fruit of Golden Rain Trees and let dry for winter arrangements.
• Prune back annuals like Blue Salvia and Dianthus to the ground and mulch. They may go through the winter and bloom again.

Miscellaneous
• Dig up Caladiums now with foliage intact, allow to dry, remove dried foliage and store in peat moss in a cool dark place for replanting next year.
• Force bulbs for indoor show. Place bulb on gravel and water enough to cover the roots, keep in dark place until root system is established and sprout reaches 3 inches, bring gradually into the light and refill container with water to original level. Enjoy the blooms of Paper-white, Narcissus, Lily of the Valley, Jonquil, or Hyacinth in this way.
• Make sure the birds in your garden have food, shelter, and water.
• Place leaves in compost bin.

In Bloom
Mums, Marigolds, Periwinkle, Salvia, Sasanquas, Golden Rain Tree, Roses, Ageratum, Aster, Camellia, Celosia, Colchicum, Dahlia, Petunia, Salvia, Torenia, and Zinnia.
Should I Winterize My Lawn?

How many times lately have you been to your local garden center only to notice there are so many fertilizer bags that say “Winterizer” or “Fall Lawn Food” on them? Then you may question which one is best for your needs. The answer is simpler than you think. But, to answer the question “Should I Winterize My Lawn?” above, for now I’ll say Yes … and No! While I am not saying don’t prepare your lawn for winter, you should be cautious when using winterizer type fertilizers.

Winterizer fertilizers are a controversial practice here in the south mainly since our primary grass types are all warm-season grasses (centipede, St. Augustine, zoysia, etc.). Warm-season grasses begin to decline in growth rate around mid-late summer as shorter day-lengths approach. Cool-season grasses (fescue, bluegrass, etc.), however, are beginning their second growth cycle (first in the spring) during this time period and benefit from a winterizer much more than warm-season grasses. So, what should you do to prepare your lawn for winter?

First, let’s look at what each number on a bag of fertilizer represents. If you have a bag of winterizer fertilizer that reads 32-0-10, the numbers represent the percentage of Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K), respectively. Nitrogen promotes leaf and stem growth and although most winterizers are often void of phosphorus, it promotes root growth and fruiting and flowering in plants. Promoting growth is not what we want this time of year. Potassium is a very important nutrient in overall plant health. It helps to strengthen and harden plants from top to bottom, making them more tolerant of cold and stress. While all nutrients are essential for plant growth and/or development, potassium is the key element in winter preparation, particularly for warm-season grasses. Potassium promotes winter-hardiness.

Winterizer fertilizers, especially those containing a high percentage of nitrogen, are most adapted for cool-season grasses, promoting growth and hardiness to grass types that are in the fall growth cycle. Excess nitrogen applied late in the year to warm-season grasses may result in disease problems in the spring. A soil test will provide you with information about your current soil’s nutrition and soil test kits can be acquired at your local extension office. Most soil tests I’ve viewed in Harrison county indicate a need to add potassium. However, if your soil test results indicate you have plenty of potassium, then there’s no need to add more, or anything for that matter. So, to prepare your lawn for winter, apply the recommended amount of N, P, and K during the spring and summer but make sure it has the right amount of potassium for winter hardiness.
Filamentous Algae Control

Many homeowners incorporate water features into their backyard landscapes. These features may be smaller and constructed on one’s property or larger and adjoined by multiple landowners. In both situations there are a variety of aquatic problems that can detract from the aesthetic value of the water feature. One of the most common problems is “pond scum”. Often times this scum is the result of a filamentous algae bloom during the spring and summer months. Filamentous algae does not have roots and will drift around in the water collecting nutrients and sunlight. As it grows the long green strands form a net that catches gases causing it to float to the surface creating the scum that will drift with the wind across the water.

As with any pest, prevention of the problem is key. Ponds that have had problems with algae in the past should take note of the surrounding landscape. Lawns and gardens that drain into the pond have the potential to wash excess fertilizer into the pond. This scenario creates a high likelihood of an algae bloom in the warmer months. Consider creating a vegetation buffer to slow the water down by not fertilizing around the pond or on slopes that will drain into the pond. Additionally, make sure to clean up any spilt fertilizer or granules that may have fallen on sidewalk or pavement. Lastly, water coloring dyes may be used to block sunlight from penetrating the water and limiting the growth potential of algae.

Once the filamentous algae has bloomed, chemical treatment is the best option for control. While an algae bloom in smaller bodies of water is relatively easy to treat, larger ponds can take more work and additional considerations. Often times these larger ponds may be bordered by other landowners and possibly fall under a homeowner’s association to manage. In both situations it is important to treat the pond before the bloom has covered 20% of the surface area. Failure to do so can result in a fish kill due to depleted oxygen levels from the decomposing algae. There are a wide variety of products available to treat filamentous algae. The most common are those containing copper sulfate or diquat. Always make sure to read the label and follow all instructions to make sure that the correct product is chosen and is applied appropriately. This is particularly important with copper sulfate, because there is a risk of copper toxicity in low alkalinity ponds.
Southern Blight of Landscape Plants

Southern blight, caused by the fungus *Sclerotium rolfsii*, is a very destructive disease that affects a wide range of plants. Although southern blight was first described on tomato plants, the disease can also be found in perennial and woody plants such as azalea, hydrangea, and crabapple. Southern blight is particularly common when there is hot, wet weather that is favorable to the pathogen. Though the pathogen resides in the soil, container plants may also be affected by the disease.

The first symptom of southern blight that is generally seen is a sudden wilting or flagging of leaves on succulent shoots. At early stages of the disease, plants may recover slightly from this wilting overnight, but it soon becomes permanent. Typically, wilting is followed by the rapid collapse and death of the whole plant. Inspection of affected plants will show brown, water-soaked and sunken cankers that girdle the stem one to two inches above or below the soil line. A white, fan-like mat of fungal mycelia will frequently be seen just below the soil surface as well as on fallen leaves and other plant debris. In addition to this mat of mycelia, light brown resting structures called sclerotia will often be seen. These sclerotia are about the size of a mustard seed. When conditions for disease are no longer favorable, the mycelial mat will disappear. However, the sclerotia remain in the soil and will reinfect plants when conditions again become favorable. Sclerotia can survive in the soil for several years. Sclerotia are often spread on hand tools or in soil contributing to the spread of the disease.

As with many plant diseases, control of southern blight is best accomplished by prevention. Store any soil media to be added away from contact with the native soil. Never add non-sterile planting media into old media. Clean leaves and other plant debris out of the garden area as these can harbor the fungus. In the landscape, avoid planting susceptible plants in old garden areas where the fungus is present. Plants that have been damaged by southern blight should be removed and destroyed. Fungicide controls for southern blight should be applied in late May and early June. Heritage (azoxystrobin) should be applied at the label rate and may be used on a broad range of annuals, perennials and woody plants. More than one fungicide application will likely be needed.
Herb Gardening for the Cool Season

Here on the Gulf Coast, many home gardeners complain that some herbs seem to melt in the heat of summer and just won’t grow in our hot, humid summers. While the typical garden center has shelves stocked with herbs in the spring, some grow better in our cool season. This may come as a surprise to those of us who have relocated from a cooler area and never had issues with growing certain herbs during the summer before.

You’ve probably read about salsa gardens while browsing online or flipping through gardening magazines for ideas. While tomatoes and peppers grow in our warm season, cilantro performs better as a cool season annual. Whether you love or hate cilantro, if you want to grow it here you may have to start your own from seed or find a local garden center that can source them in fall.

Dill is another herb that prefers cooler weather. Unfortunately, it may be difficult to have fresh dill at the same time your garden cucumbers are ready for pickling. If you do attempt to grow dill in the summer, make sure you seed some every few weeks to have a constant supply as it won’t last long in the summer heat.

Parsley is a biennial but performs best in our environment when grown as a cool season annual planted in the fall. When the weather heats up, it will usually begin to flower. Once it has flowered, or bolted, that is a signal that it no longer has good flavor.

Of course, some of our favorite evergreen herbs such as rosemary, oregano, and thyme are great to grow on their own or to serve as anchors in annual herb gardens. Rosemary’s winter blooms can also be a source of nectar when not much else is blooming. Once spring comes around, make sure to cut your oregano back so it will flush fresh growth for the new season.

In our climate we are fortunate to be able to grow different herbs all year round. This fall consider trying cool season herbs in your garden- you may be surprised by what will thrive.
Fall/Winter Pasture Notes

With the slightest fall feel to our sunrises the past few days I have developed a slight itch to start planting a few oats, maybe a little ryegrass in the next few weeks. That itch must be spreading, as we have had several calls the past few days for information on ryegrass varieties, planting rates, and other cool season forages.

As you consider what to plant, how much, and when, there are lots of variables to consider. From available acreage, your number of animals to graze, stage of reproduction/growth the animals are in, equipment available, current weather…. All of those are just a start to the list of considerations for planting cool season forages.

For this article I’d like to point out for ryegrass we have many varieties (60 +) available that offer good grazing when used in the right situation, but most come down to a primary difference. Is it a tetraploid or diploid, which is based on the number of chromosomes in the grass. Diploid varieties have two sets of chromosomes (2n = 14) in each cell; their cells are smaller in size with lower water (moisture) content; their plant structures, leaf and seed size) are smaller; and the plants tend to produce more tillers. Higher tiller density can provide a denser stand, be more competitive with weeds, and sustain production in lower fertility and wetter soils. Diploids also tend to have a more prostrate growth (horizontal) type, which allows the stand to be more persistent in heavy grazing scenarios. On the other hand, tetraploid varieties have four sets of chromosomes (4n = 28) in each cell with larger cell sizes, wider leaves, larger seed size, greater content of soluble carbohydrates (sugar and starch), and less fiber content. Tetraploids tend to have higher water content in their cells; therefore, animals will need to consume more forage to achieve the same dry matter intake than when grazing diploid types of annual ryegrass.

While both have great attributes, a key note that bears repeating is that we consistently see diploids tend to germinate faster in the fall often leading to earlier grazing when moisture is available, but tetraploids are slower maturing in the spring, adding more days of grazing to the spring growing season. Depending on your grazing needs there are times to plant these types of grass separately and times we may consider mixing them. In a situation where we need the ryegrass to mature early for summer grasses to grow in, a diploid variety may be a higher consideration. When grazing needs are high and more days of grazing are needed, mixing them can help to get early and late season grazing. When a need is there for added days on the springtime growth, and fall grazing needs are not as high, the slower maturing tetraploid grasses may be beneficial.

As you make your planting decisions this fall keep in mind that each annual ryegrass type and variety has its strengths and weaknesses; make sure that you select one that provides the greatest advantage for your unique grazing situation. Your management and use, along with the environment, will play big roles in which variety you decide to plant for grazing purposes. If we can be of any assistance, please contact us at your local Extension Office or check out the following links for information on cool season forage publications.

http://extension.msstate.edu/content/grass-planting-rates