

A decorative border of evergreen trees surrounds the text. The trees are arranged in a single row along the top and bottom edges, and in vertical columns along the left and right edges.

OCTOBER LANDSCAPE GARDENER

by

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As we move into October with its cooler, shorter days there are many projects which have waited for this time of year.

If not already done, seeding of your lawn is still possible. Planting of most ornamentals, pruning, soil testing/ applying lime, leaf raking, and Spring bulb planting may have to be moved to the weekends -only as evening daylight diminishes.

With September's cool-down continuing, it is a good time to plant perennials. Planting during the first three weeks of October, will allow them to develop a root system capable of sustaining the plant through the winter and giving them a head start on those planted next spring. Don't wait too long on these, as late planted perennials are often not able to withstand a hard winter. Planting and transplanting of woody plants, now through mid November is less stressful on the plants as a cooler weather pattern moves into our area, thus, reducing, not eliminating, the need for after-planting watering.

Pruning can be restarted by the middle of October. Do not prune plants which flower in early Spring

I keep seeing people making the mistake of pruning azaleas in the late summer and fall. This cuts off the flower buds which produce next years flowers. Prune azaleas between flower drop and mid July only, if you want to enjoy all of the flowers.

With lawn fertilization in September and November, the month of October is a good time to put down lime, if needed. A soil test is the best way to determine the need and quantity of material to use. Soil testing is available through the Md. Extension Service and their local agents.

October starts the season of natural leaf fall. Use care when raking in areas with newly seeded grass, rake lightly, or use blowers, at times when the grass is dry, to prevent dislodging the young grass plants. Removal of fallen leaves is important where new grass is starting to grow as these areas can be easily killed out by smothering with leaves. Frequently removing the worst of the leaves is better than infrequent attempts to get every leaf out of the grass.

Planting of pansies for color now and next spring and ornamental kale/cabbage for winter interest can make your landscape more exciting during the fall/early winter months. Other plants for Winter interest include woody plants- Red Twig and Yellow stem Dogwoods, and Ornamental grasses with their bronze foliage and seed heads. October is a great time for planting bulbs. Be aware that squirrels like the taste of tulips, but shy away from the poisonous daffodils. Plant in drifts, that resemble a tear drop shape for a natural look and avoid single rows. If you must have tulips, plant as usual then cover the area with a coarse wire mesh to keep squirrels out. Be sure to remove the wire mesh just prior to the tulips coming up in the Spring.

If and only if you have decided to forego seeding this year and weeds are a problem, October is a great month to put down a weed control. Some of the later appearing weeds which are missed by the Spring application can be cleaned up by a Fall application.

*** Information given here is to be used at your own risk. Always read the label of pesticides and follow label directions. Label directions supercede information given here as to suitability of intended use.