

## October Gardening

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Now that October is almost here I can't help but think of fall. Of course, in Florida, fall doesn't quite feel or look the same as it does up north but, at least summer is officially over and the weather will hopefully be getting cooler in the near future. If you want to get outside there are plenty of things to do in the yard so, read on if you need any suggestions.

\* As the temperatures cool down a little and the days become shorter the turf won't require as much water. Let your lawn tell you when it's time to water. Don't turn on your irrigation again until an area of the lawn folds up its leaf blades. Remember, water deeply but infrequently!

\* Replant spent flower beds with cool-season annuals such as; alyssum, calendula, chrysanthemum, dianthus, geranium, petunia, snapdragon, pansy, flowering tobacco, stock, and flowering kale.

\* If you have poinsettias, do not prune them now if you want the colorful bracts for Christmas.

\* Now is a good time to plant container-grown trees and shrubs.

\* Give your hedges their final trimming before winter sets in.

\* Remove all dead or diseased wood from your shrubs and trees. To keep from spreading any diseases when pruning, wipe the blades clean and then spray a mild bleach solution on all pruning equipment and then let it air dry.

\* A few of the herbs that can be planted this month include; borage, chives, coriander, lavender, mint, rosemary, sage, sweet marjoram, lemon grass and thyme.

\* Bulbs that can be added to the landscape include; Lily-of-the-Nile (*Agapanthus*), amaryllis, calla, crinum, Aztec lily (*Sprekelia*), Anemone, Society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*), Snowflake (*Leucojum*), Kaffir lily (*Clivia*), Walking iris (*Neomarica*), Narcissus, Iris (not German or Japanese), Watsonia (*Watsonia* spp.), Spider lily (*Hymenocallis* sp.) Elephant ears (*Alocasia*, *Colocasia*, *Xanthosoma*) African iris (*Moraea* spp.), *Tritonia crocata* var. *miniata* and rain lily (*Zephyranthes* spp.).

\* If you didn't plant strawberries in September then this is your last month to do so.

\* If you haven't done it yet - add a fresh layer of compost to your garden now before you plant your cool-season crops.

\* Delay all of your pruning of vines and fruit trees until mid-winter.

\* Vegetables that can be planted in October include; beets, broccoli, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, carrots (sow the seeds directly in the garden), cauliflower, celery, collards, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onions- bulbing, bunching and multipliers, English peas, radishes (sow the seeds directly in the garden), spinach, and turnips.

\* Vegetable seeds that can be sown in October for planting in November are; beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, collards, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, English peas, spinach and turnips.

- To ensure that your poinsettia and Christmas cactus bloom during the holidays make sure that they get at least 14 hours of total and uninterrupted darkness through the night. Only if there are flood lights, street lights or house lights nearby will you need to start covering the plants now with a box or dark cloth during the night, starting in the late afternoon and uncovering it in the morning. Continue to do this until the middle of December or blooming begins, whichever comes first.