

Tips for Planting and Protecting Your Fall Landscape

As the crisp fall air ushers in a new season, many gardeners may be left wondering: what now? Garden experts from across the country weighed in with their tips on the best things you can do this fall for a fabulous garden next year.

Plant now, bloom later

Judy Nauseef, president of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD), suggests planning ahead for next spring. "Fall is the time to take stock of your garden and plan for next year," she advises. "You can see what worked and what didn't, where you have holes and what needs to be replaced or moved."

If you need help assessing your garden, she recommends calling in a professional landscape designer for help. You can find one in your area at www.apld.org.

"Once you know what you want to add, plant new perennials and shrubs in the fall, and you will have larger, stronger plants with better blossoms next spring," adds Nauseef.



Many perennials provide color through the end of the season, especially trendy grasses. For your shade garden, try Hakonechloa 'Beni-kaze' from Briggs Nursery for its attractive green foliage that turns brilliant red in the fall. This gorgeous flowing Japanese forest grass is stunning planted in mass with ferns, hostas or other shade-loving perennials.

Give your containers a fall facelift

By summer's end, container plantings have often seen their day. Give your tired containers a fresh look by adding bright fall annuals and colorful foliage in bold fall colors of red, orange, deep purple and gold. There are still plenty of plants available at your local garden center that will see your containers through the cooler months of fall.

"There are plenty of pansies, mums and asters available, but don't stop there," says Ed Bemis, of the Massachusetts Flower Growers Association. "You can create wonderful unique fall flower pots using foliage and flowering plants in the colors of autumn."

Some favorites are yellow, red and rust colored snapdragons that will keep blooming through a bit of frost, and orange and rust coleus.

Everything's coming up roses

"Fall is an excellent time for planting, and roses are no exception," says Steve Hutton, plantsman and president of Conard-Pyle Co.

"Establishing roses in the fall is easy," adds Hutton. "The weather and soil conditions are better in the fall, as opposed to spring when it tends to be cold, muddy and wet."



For fall color, Hutton recommends planting the new Drift groundcover roses. Continuously blooming from spring to early frost, they are naturally dwarf, with very attractive foliage. Just remember to give them plenty of water and lots of sun.

Frost protector



No matter what you're growing, a sudden frost or freeze is deadly, spelling doom to your garden and landscape. Protect your lush flowering baskets, vegetables, herbs and favorite plants from Jack Frost with FreezePruf, new this year from The Liquid Fence Company. This non-toxic spray can increase a plant's tolerance to cold and protect home gardens from damage caused by cold.

This means gardeners can get a couple more weeks of growing and harvesting – at least two weeks earlier in spring and two weeks later in the fall. Just imagine tomatoes in October and mums still blooming after Thanksgiving.

Deer-proof your garden

Winter months are some of the deadliest times for deer destruction in the garden. "Deer are creatures of habit and stay near a good food source – like your backyard," says Dave Mizejewski, naturalist with the National Wildlife Association. "A lush garden or lawn is a magnet for hungry deer and rabbits, especially in the winter."

To keep deer out, look for all-natural products, like Liquid Fence Deer & Rabbit Repellent, that use taste and scent aversion to turn animals off your plants and make them unappetizing to common garden-munchers.

Repellents should be applied monthly and should be reapplied after a heavy downpour of an inch or more.

Winterize your accessories

Mother Nature "naturalizes" cast stone and terra cotta garden accessories, but the harsh forces of winter can cause fine planters, birdbaths and statuary to crack and crumble.

According to the "garden accessory connoisseurs" at Campania International, a little care will help your garden "art" last for generations. Cast stone planters and statuary should be raised off any surface, which freezes and thaws. Terra cotta planters, which can absorb moisture and are subject to winter freeze-thaw cycles, should be stored indoors for winter.

If your planters are left planted outside over the winter, raise them off the ground so they will drain and not freeze to the surface. To winterize both cast stone and terra cotta accessories, simply place them on two pressure-treated wood strips, making sure not to block the drainage hole.

For birdbaths and fountains, bring tops in for the winter. All bases, bench legs and statuary should be raised up off the ground, so as not to freeze to the ground's surface.

Remember, fall is the best time to protect your investment, so you can have a glorious spring garden.