

Colorado Master Gardener

## YEAR ROUND GARDENING

# NOVEMBER GARDEN CALENDAR

Eileen Tully, Colorado Master Gardener

We had our first hard freeze the second week of October and many annuals and tender vegetation were killed. It felt like an abrupt end to the garden year. However, if you're an avid planter and think it's all over, don't give up. As long as you can dig in the soil you can plant spring flowering bulbs.

**Organizing the Big Clean Up:** There seems to be so much to do that the job can get overwhelming. With a plan the job becomes manageable and you can accomplish some chores now that will alleviate extra work next spring.

- Discard fallen, spoiled or mummified fruits to reduce disease carry-over to the next year.
- Prune and remove dead or damaged branches from shrubs and trees. With trees bare of leaves, you can shape and modify them. Cut out branches that cross over one another and branches that are obviously broken. Do not prune spring flowering trees and shrubs in the fall.
- Remove frost killed annuals.
- Cut perennial stalks four to six inches above ground. Leaving some foliage will catch snow for winter moisture and protect the crowns of plants. Ornamental grasses add winter interest so leave them as they are.
- Mow or rake fallen leaves from the lawn and garden beds. Each new gust of wind will bring new leaves into your yard so patience and perseverance are good qualities to have. Although total leaf removal is impossible get as much as you can. A thick accumulation of leaves is an invitation to voles and mice. The first rule in pest control is to eliminate habitat and hiding places. Shred dry leaves by running over them with the mower. Recycle and compost leaves into mulch and soil-improving compost.



*Photo courtesy of Sondra Bourgault*

**Protect:**

- Check the depth of mulch on flower beds. A two to three-inch layer of mulch will protect flower beds from frost heaving.
- BUT, keep mulch pulled back several inches from the base of fruit trees to prevent bark injury from mice and other rodents.
- Protect ornamental and fruit trees from rabbit damage by wrapping or enclosing in a wire screen.
- Our winter sun can be intense. To protect against sunscald on young thin-barked trees, insulate the bark with commercial tree wraps made of crepe paper. Tree wraps are available at local nurseries. Trees most likely to be affected by sunscald are fruit trees, ashes, oaks, maples, lindens and willows.
- Strawberries usually go dormant when nighttime temperatures consistently reach 20 degrees. To keep them healthy, cover with a three-inch layer of mulch.
- Roses: in late November, after several nights of 20-degree weather, protect and insulate the graft union of hybrid, floribunda and miniature rose bushes by mounding soil around the plants and adding mulch on top. You can contain the soil and mulch with rose collars available at local nurseries. Cut back tall rose canes to 24 inches to prevent winter breakage. Don't prune climbing roses this time of year.
- Water features: garden pools also need protection from freezing. To lessen the chance of ice damage, cover the pool with insulated material or float a stock tank water heater in the pond.

**Winter-wise:**

- Over the coming months when the weather is nice, look for opportunities to work in your garden; it will reduce the amount of work next spring, and it just feels good to get in the garden.
- And, of course, water every chance you get. Newly planted trees and shrubs will require extra water over winter, especially if there are long periods without moisture and days of desiccating winds. To keep your landscape alive with the least amount of winter damage, water at least once a week when the temperature is over 50 degrees.

When the weather's not-so-nice take time to plan and dream of next year's garden. Even though gardening is a lot of work, and can be frustrating when things don't go as planned, celebrate the fact you love to garden. The connection to the earth and to other gardeners is gratifying beyond measure.