

YEAR ROUND GARDENING

SEPTEMBER GARDENING CALENDAR

by Eileen Tully, Colorado Master Gardener

We live in a semi-arid climate. I mention that all the time. But this summer with abundant rainfall we had a chance to see what almost daily rainfall can do. Everything is so **green!** Turf, flowers, vegetables and trees are thriving. And, so are weeds. As the days get shorter, perennial weeds build up storage carbohydrates in roots to overwinter. This makes fall an ideal time to control perennial weeds such as dandelions, plantain, clover and bindweed.

Weed control

- In landscape beds and vegetable gardens, dig all weeds and add mulch to squelch their return
- If weeds are too numerous to dig, apply an herbicide such as 2, 4-D following directions on the package. Fall applications typically show better results than spring applications. What you do now will impact weed populations next spring.

Flowers and edibles

- September is a good time to plant, or transplant perennials
- Harvest pears, apples, and ever-bearing strawberries as they ripen. Cover new fruit on "Heritage" raspberries with bird netting.
- Mature green tomatoes can be ripened indoors. Allow winter squash and pumpkins to cure on the vine.
- In early September plant radishes, spinach and lettuce for harvest in October...
- Divide spring and summer blooming perennials. Replant them no later than Sept 15 to allow sufficient time for rooting before the ground freezes. Fall and winter watering is critical to for the survival of fall plantings.
- Divide peonies. Peonies don't require regular division to maintain successful blooming you can divide plants to get additional peonies. Dig deeply and carefully to uproot the fleshy, brittle roots for separation. Separate so that each division has three to five 'eyes.' These are the shoots for next season. Plant carefully 1" to 2" below the surface to protect the eyes from freezing. Peonies won't flower if they are planted too deep.



Photo courtesy of Eileen Tully

- Save coleus, wax begonias, impatiens and fuchsia and bring indoors. You can dig up plants and cut them back about half or take cuttings of shoot tips and root in moist vermiculite, soil mix or perlite.
- Dig up tender bulbs like gladiolus, cannas, caladiums and tuberous begonias. Allow them to air dry and store in dry vermiculite in a place that does not freeze over winter.
- For long lasting dried arrangements, cut strawflower, static, baby's breath, "Annabelle" hydrangea and celosia. Bind them securely and hang upside down in a dry, well-ventilated area.
- Late September plant spring flowering bulbs. Select large, healthy bulbs, the larger the bulb the larger the flower. Mark where your bulbs are with stones, sticks, tags or create a map showing their locations. Otherwise you may mistakenly dig in to them next spring.
- Reduce watering for established trees and shrubs so they can harden off in preparation for winter continue to water newly planted trees and shrubs.
- Improve your garden soil by adding manure, compost and leaves to increase organic matter.
- Turn your compost pile in preparation for the addition of fall leaves and garden clean up trimmings.

Lawn

- Fertilize cool season grasses, like bluegrass and fescue, in September with a balanced fertilizer to benefit from the ideal conditions for growth. Apply a winterizing formulation in November.
- Tall fescue grass can be planted now. Seed germinates in 10 to 14 days. Fescue has a coarser blade than Kentucky blue grass, but is more drought resistant and shade tolerant.
- Take plenty of pictures so you'll be able to recall garden successes as well as things you want to improve next year.

When you have questions, Colorado State University Extension has research-based answers. Get answers to your horticulture questions by visiting ask.extension.org any time day or night. You can also call 719-520-7684 Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., or email CSUmq2@elpasoco.com.