

NOVEMBER

MAINTENANCE

- ⊙ Re-set mowers to 1.5 to 2 inches for fescue and bluegrass lawns and 1 to 1.5 inches for Bermuda grass lawns. Consider leaving lawn clippings on the lawn. As clippings break down, they provide the lawn with nutrients, reducing the need for fertilizers by 30-50%. Clippings will not cause thatch.
- ⊙ Give your tools a good cleaning.
- ⊙ Remember to adjust your irrigation systems downward for fall weather. Once the rains begin, turn systems off. If there is no rain for 2 weeks, resume watering.
- ⊙ Feed your compost pile with fallen leaves.
- ⊙ Remove weakened branches on trees if they're likely to come down in high winds.
- ⊙ Before ripping out tomato plants, harvest any green tomatoes. To ripen, place in boxes and store in a cool spot. Be sure tomatoes do not touch each other, and check frequently, discarding any fruits that show discolored soft spots or mold. They will get red but not be as flavorful as your vine ripened ones.
- ⊙ Pull containerized tender and tropical plants (hardy to 25-30°F), such as Mandevilla, trumpet flower (Brugmansia) and Bougainvillea, close to the house for protection during the cold months. Wait to fertilize container plants until February.

FERTILIZING

PEST/ WEED CONTROL

- ⊙ If peach or nectarine trees were infected with peach leaf curl during past seasons, you can treat for this now, by spraying three times during the dormant season with a copper product that contains at least 80% copper. The first spray should occur at the end of this month. Use Microcop and Sta-Stuk (a product which maximizes the adhesion and longevity of the copper spray).

PLANTING

- ⊙ Cold-season annuals such as calendulas, Iceland poppies, fairy primroses, pansies, snapdragons and violas, along with winter sweet peas, can be planted now to give you nice color through the spring.

- ⊙ Plant spring-blooming bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinth, freesias, narcissus, iris, anemone, and ranunculus.
- ⊙ Remember to refrigerate tulips and hyacinths for 6-8 weeks before planting. Store in paper bags in the refrigerator away from ripe fruits, and be sure the bulbs stay dry.
- ⊙ Bulbs that don't need refrigeration can be held dormant in the crisper of your refrigerator and be planted later to prolong the blooming season. Remember -- if fruits (apples, pears, bananas, tomatoes, etc.) are stored near bulbs, the bulbs may not bloom.
- ⊙ If planting annual seedlings, opt for the four-inch pots; tiny plants from six-packs may just sulk.
- ⊙ For a memorable spring bloom, try mass plantings of colorful tulips and daffodils.
- ⊙ Sow seeds of fava beans, chard, peas, radishes and spinach.
- ⊙ Plant garlic, onions and shallots.
- ⊙ Consider planting cover crops in unused garden spaces. Cover crops keep soil from compacting during winter rains and add much needed nitrogen to the soil when turned into beds in the spring. Popular cover crops include fava beans, which are also edible, and strawberry and red clover. Prepare soil as for vegetables.
- ⊙ Paper White bulbs take about 5-7 weeks to bloom. If you want indoor bloom for the holidays, start the bulbs in early November. To prevent legginess, start bulbs outdoors the beginning of November in a sunny location. You can start bulbs in either soil or gravel, and when foliage has reached 2 to 3 inches tall, bring indoors if the weather is cold and place in a window or a porch with full sun. If the weather stays warm, leave the plants in their sunny location out of doors. Once buds begin to develop, you can place Narcissus anywhere in the house.

SHOPPING

- ⊙ Smart buys: leftover garden stock, especially citrus and avocado trees.
- ⊙ Prepare for being indoors more with indoor plants, decorative pottery and holiday decorations.
- ⊙ Now is the time to select trees for their fall color.
 - REDS: Chinese Tallow, Dogwood, Scarlet Maple varieties. Some reds that flash orange as well are Chinese Pistachio, Crape Myrtle, and Liquidambar Palo Alto or L. Festival.
 - YELLOWS: Ginkgo, Birch, Fruitless Mulberry, Golden Rain Tree and Liquidambar varieties.
 - BURGUNDY: Raywood Ash, Flowering Pear, and Liquidambar Burgandy.
 - JAPANESE MAPLES: Famous for their brilliant fall colors. The red-leaf Japanese maple varieties such as Bloodgood and Moonfire display bright scarlet tones. Acer palmatum, the wild species, displays unmatched bright yellow and orange tones. Coral Bark Maple produces bright yellow leaves.