



Tips for the Garden – November


 Trim evergreen hedges now. They will look attractive all winter and you can use those wonderful greens for holiday decorating. Make sure to prune the inside of the shrub not just tip growth. Pruning in this fashion will encourage better air flow into the interior of the hedge, which encourages healthier growth. It also increases light to internal branches and reduces breakage under heavy snow and ice build-ups.


<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/education/mgprogram/mgmanual/07pruning.pdf>


You can also prune them in the spring before new growth is emerging.


<http://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-and-plant-advice/horticulture-care/pruning-evergreens>


 Use the branches that you have pruned and decorate and plant up areas around your doorways for the winter months. Put fresh boughs, twigs, berry branches and cones into large earth/soil filled pots and create an outdoor “flower arrangement”. You will be amazed how these creations help beat the winter blues as you come and go from your home.


 Make a check list of other trees and shrubs that need pruning. Start with the three “Ds”. Remove **Dead, Diseased** and **Damaged** branches from your landscape any time of the year. If you are trying to encourage more flowering, less flowering, more dense habit, etc., check out the **Free** downloadable manual on pruning through Cornell University’s Cooperative Extension entitled *Pruning: An Illustrated Guide to Pruning Ornamental Trees and Shrubs*. Just Google the title and you will see a PDF. It will take several minutes to download but well worth the wait for all your pruning questions.


 Check out the garden center bargains at this time of year. You can purchase wonderful garden tools and accessories for all those garden buffs on your holiday list. And, you will beat the rush.


 Plant more trees – their prices have been reduced for end of season clearance and there are still plenty of choices in the market place. Purchasing spring blooming trees will give an area an added spark of color after the cold winter. Good tree selections include: redbuds, magnolias, and cherries. Dogwoods do best when planted in the spring.

 Repair and plant eroded areas. Tall native grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees can help handle the excess runoff that you may be experiencing during storm events. Moisture loving plants will create deep root systems so that they will provide greater stability to eroded soil areas – especially important along stream banks and slopes.


 If you would like to extend your fall crops, build a cold frame from hay bales. Pick a place in the garden so the plants will be protected from the west winds. Put a bale or two to the north and to the south. The east side of the bed should remain open to the sun. You can use clear plastic to cover the vegetables by securing one end to the hay bales and one end buried into the ground – similar to a lean-to. You can also use old window sashes propped against the bales. The covers will protect the crops for extended picking. Kale, onions, parsley cilantro, radishes and leafy greens are all good choices for this method of winter growing.

 Compost your Jack O' Lantern pumpkins but save your whole pumpkins and fall corn for Christmas décor. You can spray them gold and put them into a large basket with some Christmas greens and pine cones. With a nice big colorful bow, your doorstep is dressed for the holidays.

 Dig the hole now for your Christmas tree that you intend to purchase and plant later. Put the soil in a large trash can and put it into the garage to keep the soil from freezing. Line the hole with hay and cover the hole over with a board. This will keep the hole warm so that it doesn't freeze – when Christmas is over, remove the board, remove the hay and put the tree in the hole and then fill in with the soil from the trash can. Use the hay as a finishing topping like mulch. You can purchase a finishing mulch in the spring. Christmas clean up can't be any easier!

 Continue to plant spring bulbs. In the Delaware Valley Region, you can plant until the first week in December and still have beautiful blooms in the spring – as long as the ground isn't frozen. Generally most spring blooming bulbs require a cold period of 10 to 13 weeks to trigger good bloom. You can plant them individually with a bulb planter or dig a hole the size of a dinner plate and layer the bulbs and soil. Make sure to leave plenty of room between the bulbs for future growth. Largest bulbs go on the bottom and smaller bulbs towards the top. This allows different bulb species to come up in one area of the garden at staggered times, giving high visual impact. It's also easier to keep track of where you've planted your bulbs. Plant one or several bulbs in one hole using a trowel. Allow several inches of space between the bulbs in the same hole. There are markings on many trowels that give measurements for depth. Most bulbs do best when planted twice their height – example 1 inch would be planted three inches deep – one inch for the bulb and two inches of soil above the bulb. If you want to naturalize your bulbs– purchase bulbs that say “best for naturalizing”. These bulbs will multiply over time and create an amazing visual display.


<http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/bulb-planting>

 Prepare bulb pans for forcing by layering bulbs in containers and burying the pots in the ground covered over with leaves or branches. Bulb pans can be forced in doors or used for entry ways and focal areas come spring. Remember, each bulb will have a different cold requirement so make sure to check its requirement before bringing indoors. Here are some helpful guides


<http://gardening.about.com/od/fallinthegarden/a/PrechillingBulb.htm>


<http://www.theplantexpert.com/springbulbs/Forcing.html#BulbChillTimes>


You can also buy pre-chilled bulbs to speed up the process.


 Empty bird baths and other pottery containers that collect water – so they don't crack when temperatures get below freezing. You can wrap them in plastic and leave them in place or put them


in the garage or garden shed. If you have fiberglass or resin products, the majority can stay out over the winter.


 Go through the garden and trim back any dried stems without winter interest. Cut these back to the crown of the plant – that part of the plant still actively growing. This will reduce your work for spring cleanup. Remember to leave some dried leaves in garden beds as small foraging ground birds such as Dark-eyed Juncos need habitat over the cold winter.


 Make sure your rosemary plant is in a protected spot for the winter. Rosemary will keep on giving all winter long for recipes like chicken rosemary, soups and stews. You can also bring rosemary onto unheated porches with a good light source. Water on sunny warmer days throughout the winter. It's best to water less than too much!

 Note the areas that you can see from windows, entryways and walkways to add garden objects for additional visual excitement in winter. In the spring, these areas will translate well for new points of interest and planting.

 Use obelisks in the garden for vines that get out of control during the regular growing season. It's also a great time to place an arbor in the garden for winter enjoyment and you will be ready for a spring planting of climbing roses. Consider putting some clear lights on the arbor to add a spark of joy on cold dark nights.

 Pile tree branches teepee style to create a wonderful structure for spring peas or rambling vines. Even to provide shelter for animals over winter.

 Edge beds with metal strips and stakes. Or, consider using a sharp spade to clean up the edges of your garden beds. These techniques will keep the garden looking fresh all winter. You can also outline beds with fallen branches to give a more naturalized appearance.

 Take a walk in your local park or woodland and see what nature is up to – you can learn a great deal about gardening by observing how the woodland uses its leaves for creating habitat and mulch. Observe the patterns – nature's way of planting. It is amazing what you can observe that will translate well into your garden. A downed tree log, a hallowed out tree trunk, rocks with moss growing on them can all be inspirations for next year's garden. Take a camera along so that you can remember things that inspire.