Horticulture 2013 Newsletter
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Video of the Week:  Tree Selection Tips

TURFGRASS

Lawn Seeding Deadline Nears

September is the best month to reseed cool-season lawns such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. However, you can get by with an early to mid-October planting for tall fescue. October 15 is generally considered the last day for safely planting or overseeding a tall fescue lawn in the fall. If you do attempt a late seeding, take special care not to allow plants to dry out. Anything that slows growth will make it less likely that plants will mature enough to survive the winter. Seedings done after the cut-off date can be successful, but the success rate goes down the later the planting date. Late plantings that fail are usually not killed by cold temperatures but rather desiccation. The freezing and thawing of soils heave poorly rooted grass plants out of the ground, which then dry and die. Keeping plants watered will help maximize root growth before freezing weather arrives. (Ward Upham)

FRUIT

Fruit Planting Preparation

If you plan to develop or add to your fruit garden next year, now is a good time to begin preparing the planting site. Grass areas should be tilled so grass does not compete with the fruit plants for soil moisture and nutrients. Have the soil analyzed for plant nutrients. Your local K-State Research and Extension agents have information to guide you in taking the soil sample. From that sample, the agent can provide recommendations on what and how much fertilizer to add to correct nutrient...
deficiencies. Organic materials such as compost, grass clippings, leaves, hay, straw or dried manure, can be tilled into the soil to help improve its condition. Time and weather conditions generally are more suitable in the fall than in the late winter and spring for preparing soil. If fruit plants can be set by early April, they will have developed a stronger root system to support plant growth than they would if planted later. (Ward Upham)

**ORNAMENTALS**

**Planting Trees in the Fall**

The fall season can be an excellent time to plant trees. During the spring, soils are cold and may be so wet that low oxygen levels inhibit root growth. The warm and moist soils associated with fall encourage root growth. Fall root growth means the tree becomes established well before a spring-planted tree and is better able to withstand summer stresses. However, certain trees do not produce significant root growth during the fall and are better planted in the spring. These include beech, birch, redbud, magnolia, tulip poplar, willow oak, scarlet oak, black oak, willows, and dogwood.

Fall-planted trees require some special care. Remember, that roots are actively growing even though the top is dormant. Make sure the soil stays moist but not soggy. This may require watering not only in the fall but also during the winter months if we experience warm spells that dry the soil. Mulch also is helpful because it minimizes moisture loss and slows the cooling of the soil so root growth continues as long as possible. Evergreens should be moved earlier in the fall than deciduous plants. They need at least six weeks before the ground freezes for the roots to become established. (Ward Upham)

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Garlic Planting Time**

October is a good time to plant garlic (Allium sativum) if you want large quality cloves next summer. Apply 3 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet and mix into the soil before planting or fertilize according to soil test. Plant individual cloves point up and spaced 3 inches apart and 1 to 2 inches deep. The larger the clove planted, the larger the bulb at harvest. Water in well and mulch with straw to conserve soil warmth and encourage good establishment. Harvest will not occur until next summer when most of the foliage has browned.
Elephant garlic (Allium ampeloprasum) should also be planted now. It is a plant with a milder garlic flavor and is actually a closer relative to the leek than to true garlic. (Ward Upham)

**Moving Houseplants Inside for the Winter**

Many people with houseplants move some of them outside for the summer to give them better growing conditions and help them recover from the stress of an indoor environment. But as fall approaches and night temperatures approach 50°F, it is time to think about bringing plants inside for the winter.

Plants that have spent the summer outside should be inspected for insects and disease before bringing them inside. A sharp spray from a garden hose can remove insects or mites from houseplant foliage.

Insects in the potting soil can be forced out by soaking the pot in a tub of lukewarm water for about 15 minutes.

Houseplants that have been kept outdoors are accustomed to receiving much more sunlight than they do indoors. So how do we help houseplants acclimatize to the lower light levels inside? Houseplants brought in from outside should be started out in an area of the home that receives plenty of light, and then gradually moved to their permanent, darker location. This process should take four to eight weeks depending on the degree of difference in light levels between the initial and final location of the plant.

Understanding plant processes allows us to anticipate potential problems. Acclimatization gives houseplants a greater chance of retaining leaves and avoiding the stress of completely replacing them. (Ward Upham)

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