

# October Yard and Garden Tips



Autumn is officially here, and there is much to look forward to – pumpkins on the porch, apple cider, cooler temperatures, and walks through crunchy leaves. But before you get too comfortable, don't forget there are yard and garden end-of-season tasks to complete. Here are tips from the Utah State University Extension Gardeners Almanac to help. Included are links to fact sheets and videos for further information.

- Learn about average first and last frost dates around the state.
- Consider adding a smaller structure such as a low tunnel or a larger high tunnel to extend your growing season. Take note of varying construction and modification information.
- Learn how and when to harvest winter squash and store in a cool (50-55°F), dry location.
- Plant garlic cloves from mid-October through early November.
- Refer to this list of fall cleanup chores and good landscape practices to get your yard ready for winter.

- Remove vegetable plants from the garden once harvest is complete to reduce overwintering sites for insect pests.
- Protect tomatoes from early frost by covering the plants with a blanket or tarp.
- Place mulch over carrots, beets and parsnips to prevent the ground around them from freezing.
- Rototill leaves, compost, or manure into the vegetable garden to enhance soil microbe activity.
- Prune roses by heading back excessively long canes to prevent damage from heavy snow loads.
- Cut back ornamental grasses in snow-prone areas once the foliage has died down. Otherwise leave them until spring and enjoy the vertical accent during the winter.
- Plant spring-blooming bulbs through early November.
- Plant trees and shrubs in the fall to enhance root establishment.
- Dig tender perennials such as gladiolas, dahlias, begonias, and canna lilies after the foliage has died down, and store them in a cool (45-50 °F), dry place.
- Protect trunks of young trees from winter cracking by wrapping them with a white reflective tree wrap.
- Dig and remove annual flowers.
- Plant cold-hardy annuals, including pansies, primrose, kale, and ornamental cabbage.
- Prune raspberry canes to the ground after they have fruited.
- Control tough perennial weeds such as field bindweed (a.k.a. morning glory). Refer to this list of weed control options.
- Mow grass to a height of 1-to-1½ inches at the end of the season to minimize disease problems.
- Apply a quick-release nitrogen fertilizer after the last mowing (late October to early November) for early greening next spring.

## **Pests and Problems:**

- Send diseased vegetable plants and leaves to the local landfill.
- Use burlap or other soft materials to wrap evergreens to prevent snow breakage.
- Treat stone fruits (cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums) for coryneum blight at 50% leaf drop.
- Clean up and discard all fallen fruit to reduce overwintering sites for disease and insect pests.
- For more tips, visit [garden.usu.edu](http://garden.usu.edu). Here you will find information on gardening courses, growing and maintaining the yard and garden, drought resources, and the Extension Gardener's Almanac with tips for each month.

By: Utah State University Extension horticulturists