

Check your notes and calendar for what you need to be doing in your garden in November. Schedule some time to do some work in your garden before the holidays set in and cause a conflict with your time.

Annuals and Perennials

Chrysanthemum

As soon as your Chrysanthemum die back cut their stems to 2-3 inches from the soil. As long as your perennials remain dormant you can plant them throughout the fall and winter.

In frost free areas now is the time to divide your perennials. Plant your pansies now and you can enjoy color until the end of April or early May.

Plant in the ground or in a container with good drainage. You should use quality a potting soil. Add extra perlite to provide little air pockets in the soil this will help the roots to "breathe" and loosens the soil.

Plant your flowers in an area that has plenty of sunlight. Feed them an all purpose fertilizer such as Miracle Grow. Remove dead blossoms regularly this will encourage new blooms. You can also plant dianthus, snapdragons, and stock to your list.

Begin or continue to rake leaves as your situation requires and compost them.

Check and make sure tender plants are protected from frost.

Mulch with bark, sawdust, or straw to help protect your tender plants such as perennials from frost. This will create a blanket effect for the roots. Mulching will protect your plants from "heaving" as the ground freezes and thaws. Start mulching after your plants have gone completely dormant and before the first snows. Generally plan to mulch around the end of November depending in the weather forecast. If you mulch too soon the mice and rodents will nest in the mulch and may chew up the stems of the plants you are trying to protect.

You can also use leaves, pine needles, shredded bark, or straw to mulch. My favorite is straw because I believe the hollow stems provide the best insulation effect. Place a layer three to four inches deep around each plant, make sure there is room for the stems and trunks to breathe this will reduce disease problems. Increase the depth in colder or very windy areas. Leaves need to be chopped pretty fine to prevent them from smothering the plant. Whole leaves can mat together too tightly when they get wet.

If the weather suddenly turns cold cover the tops of your tender plants with burlap, cloth or dark plastic to protect them from a killing freeze. Make sure you remove the cover when the weather has warmed up some.

Cover up your compost pile to keep the rain from leaching the nutrients.

If you have young evergreens you should build a windbreak to protect them from cold winter winds. Drive posts in the ground on the prevailing wind side of your trees (generally north and west). You can use burlap or old feed sacks for the shield. I don't recommend plastic because it will get too warm on sunny days and cause the plants to burn.

In northern zones the atmosphere is thin in winter and the sun can burn new trees. You can protect the tree trunk by wrapping it with a special tree tape that can be purchased at most hardware or garden

centers.

Other tasks to implement

Feed the birds in your back yard that may not be able to find food with the snow on the ground or just the lack of food due to the winter season. Bird seed and feed is fairly inexpensive and you can feed a lot of birds for a few dollars. Next spring you can plant some bird feed that you can use next winter. It is just a good feeling that you get when you've taken care of one of God's creatures.

Drain all of your hoses and store them away so they don't freeze up and burst. This will ensure next spring when you are ready to water your garden again you won't have leaky hoses.