



FALL INTO GARDENING... SEPTEMBER'S GARDEN CALENDAR

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO BY William M. Johnson

The Master Gardener Horticulture Demonstration Garden in Carbide Park contains a Serenity Garden in addition to a wide selection of vegetable beds and a fruit orchard. The Garden will be open to the public from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 5.

Ahhh, September has arrived. Kids are back in school and the hope of cooler days is becoming more of a reality. Although it may not seem like it, September marks the beginning of a new season in our area.

The change is subtle to be sure, while temperatures still rise into the mid-nineties on a daily basis, the days of extreme summer heat are coming to an end and

the fall growing season is here. The change in temperature is nearly imperceptible, but can be felt particularly in the early mornings and late evenings which are definitely a bit cooler than a few weeks ago. The seasonal change is also apparent in the length of the day as we are rapidly approaching the autumnal equinox when days and nights are equal in duration and the fall sea-

son technically commences.

As I prepare this column, I am listening to a TV meteorologist who forecasts 88 degree temperature days in a few days. The latter days of September will likely usher in some relief from the temperature-enforced doldrums which have limited all but the most enthusiastic gardening aficionado to a frantic, perspiration-soaked



September 04, 2013



Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.



race to keep pace with landscape and garden care chores.

One good thing about our Texas Gulf Coast summers is that we get to anticipate and to better appreciate the upcoming fall season (which commences on Sunday, September 22, at 3:44 p.m. to be exact). The gardening checklist for September includes the following.

Master Gardener Newsletter Now Online: Lots of local gardeners have asked if our Master Gardener Newsletter will be posted online for easy access through the Internet? The current addition of the newsletter is now available (visit my website address provided on the byline for this column). The newsletter contains timely horticultural information for this growing area.

Master Gardener Horticulture Demonstration Garden Tour: The Master Gardeners will conduct a "Garden with the Masters" program on Thursday, September 5, and the first Thursday of each subsequent month in 2013.

A guided tour of vegetable beds as well as the fruit orchard and Asian garden will start at 9:00 a.m.; gardeners are also welcome to causally tour the garden and orchard thereafter until 11:00 a.m.

Pruning Trees: Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees. However, hold off on major pruning until midwinter. Pruning now will only stimulate tender new growth which is highly susceptible to cold injury.

Pruning Shrubs and Bushes:

September is also a good time to trim unruly shrubs and bushes. Pruning too late in the season may encourage tender new growth which could be susceptible to cold weather. Be careful not to prune plants like gardenias, camellias and azaleas at this time as these plants have already formed next spring's floral buds. Pruning these plants now will result in fewer flowers next year.

Fertilization of Shrubs: Avoid the use of high nitrogen fertilizers on shrubs from late September on through early spring. Too much nitrogen applied this late can induce late succulent growth and possible winter injury.

Divide Perennials: Late September is time to divide spring-flowering perennials such as irises, Shasta daisies, gaillardias, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriope, and ajuga. Reset divisions into well-prepared soil with generous amounts of organic material worked into the top 8 to 10 inches.

Fall Vegetables: Vegetables to plant at the beginning of September include corn, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, lima beans, pepper, squash and tomato. Toward the end of the month this list can be expanded to include broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, collard, endive, lettuce, mustard, onion, radish, and turnips.

Palms: September is the last month for transplanting palms and sagoes for the year, to ensure good establishment before

cooler temperatures arrive.

Pesticide Applications: Although daytime temperatures have been relatively moderate (which means lower than 100 degrees), it still has been a warm summer. Avoid spraying insecticides, fungicides and other pesticides during the heat of the day when temperatures are above 90 degrees.

The "carrier" of many liquid pesticides is petroleum-based and can cause some burning of leaves if applied when temperatures are high and plants are water-stressed or heat-stressed. Spraying should be done in early morning or late evening.

At a Glance

Gardening Under Glass Seminar: 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 7. Greenhouse Specialist and Galveston County Master Gardener Bob McPherson will provide a PowerPoint presentation on the set-up and management of hobby greenhouses. Topics covered include the various types of structures and the materials for building, as well as cooling, heating, water management, water injection of fertilizers, and sanitation.