

Gardeners welcome cooler temps

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office

Got weather? It's been a long enough, muggy enough and hot enough summer for most Upper Gulf Coast Texans to welcome the crisp cool front that arrived a few days ago.

The cool front even arrived several days before the official start of fall Sept. 23. Then, temperatures roared back up into the upper 90s.

Anyone who has lived here for a while knows that's the usual weather pattern for ushering in the fall season — we're likely to get a cool front to invigorate the soul, and then we get a warm spell to remind us of what we went through over the summer.

Gardeners, in particular, look forward to lower temperatures that are plant-friendly and human friendly.

That's because in our climate, autumn represents a second chance for planting. In contrast to our hot, humid summers, fall weather is down right what the doctor ordered to lift the spirits.

And while you're in such good spirits, be sure to be mindful of October's garden checklist:

Fall Plant Seminar And Sale

Many gardeners are considering basic landscape improvements and plans as part of their fall gardening activities.

The good news is that mid-October is an ideal time to

start renovating the landscape.

The cooler temperature of the fall season is much more pleasant for gardeners as well.

Inquires have been made to the office on the status of our annual plant sale.

Yes, the fall sale will be conducted, but usual program dates and activities have been revised.

The seminar will be conducted as a separate event Saturday from the plant sale Oct. 15.

Save Caladium Tubers

With the record setting temperatures of the 2011 summer, caladiums started to shut down leafy growth earlier than usual.

If you plan on saving caladium tubers for another year, be sure to dig them up before the top growth disappears — those tubers can be very difficult to locate after the top growth is gone.

Allow the tubers to air dry for seven to 10 days in a well-ventilated but shaded area.

After drying, gently remove any attached leaves and large soil particles from the tubers then store in dry peat moss, vermiculite or similar material in a well-ventilated container.

Pack so the tubers do not touch each other. Dust with an all-purpose fungicide to help prevent decay.

Store the tubers in an area where temperatures won't drop below 50 degrees.

Plant Cool-season Vegetables

Transplants of broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage can be set out this month.

Seeds of beets, carrots, kale, lettuce, mustard, radish and turnips can be planted and cloves of garlic can be set out throughout October.

Use Diversity For Early Spring Color

Pansies are cool-weather plants and perform best if planted during the last two weeks of October and during November.

Pansies need well-drained soil and at least a half day of sun. Also, check your nursery or garden center for snapdragons and pinks.



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