

# Gardeners Checklist for November

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office*



November 6, 2019



PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson



Dr. William M. 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.*

**One of the most difficult tasks for a gardener is thinning seedlings in the vegetable garden. Soon after germination, seedlings should be thinned according to the spacing distance recommended on the seed packet.**

The weather conditions over the past several days were just right by my reckoning—daytime temperatures moderately cool and nighttime temps pleasantly crisp.

As the fall season settles in, take advantage of the cool days and the slower pace of gardening to prepare your plants for win-

ter. Enjoy the beautiful weather and while you're at it, be sure to perform any needed activities in the home garden and landscape and check our upcoming educational programs as follows:

**The Great Pepper Extravaganza - Seminar & Tasting:** 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., on Saturday, November 23, at

the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park (4102-B Main, La Marque, TX).

Master Gardener Gene Speller will provide a PowerPoint presentation on growing peppers in the home garden. Topics to be discussed include background and origin of pepper plants; heat





value classification (Scoville Units); how to start from seed; culture and growing tips; recommended varieties; insect and disease control; and pepper uses & recipes.

Gene will have his homegrown peppers available for tasting and comparison. His peppers come from all four 'heat' groups: mild, medium, very hot and extremely hot, to suit everyone's taste.

The general public is also encouraged to bring in their own peppers (whole peppers only; sliced peppers cannot be accepted) for taste comparisons. Preregistration requested by e-mail ([galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com)) or phone (281-309-5065).

**Inspect landscape trees and shrubs:** Make periodic inspections on recently transplanted landscape trees and shrubs for soil moisture level. Their root systems will not become well-established for some time. While rainfall amounts have been very generous in most areas, be sure to water new transplants regularly to avoid stressing plants in the event an extended period of dry weather conditions occur.

**Plant cool season vegetables:** Cool season vegetables to plant include English peas, radishes, spinach and turnips throughout November.

**Thin seedlings:** One of the most difficult tasks for the fall gardener is thinning seedlings. Gardeners tend to over-plant vegetable seeds, especially small-seeded vegetables

like carrots, radishes and most salad greens. Soon after germination, seedlings should be thinned according to the spacing distance recommended on the seed packet. If you do not thin them, you will likely be disappointed by lack of production.

**Cool-season annuals:** This is an ideal time to plant cool-season annuals to provide color in the landscape. There are many types of annual flowers that bloom only in cooler weather. Pansies are a favorite choice as they are on the list of Texas' top-selling annual flowers.

Pansies are hardy and will bloom over a long season. The old-fashioned face varieties have been steadily improved for better garden performance, and many new varieties with solid or bi-colors without a face are now available.

Pansies are available in a wide array of colors ranging from bold yellows, oranges, and reds, to pale pastels. Miniature pansies are also becoming popular.

**Sanitation in the garden:** November is a good time to reduce the insect and disease potential in next year's garden. Remove all dead or diseased plants. This will help ensure that disease-causing fungi do not have a place to overwinter.

**Compost leaves:** Oaks, pecans and other trees in the landscape will soon start dropping their

leaves. Pound for pound, the leaves of most trees contain twice as many minerals as composted manure. Composting leaves is an excellent way to give your compost and your garden a boost.

Tree leaves that accumulate in and around your landscape represent a valuable natural resource that can be used to provide a good source of organic matter and nutrients for use in your landscape. You may complain, as you lean wearily on a leaf rake, that your neighborhood outdoes any forest, but be thankful. Hang on to your leaves. And if your neighbors don't want them, hang on to theirs as well.

Start collecting leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6-inch layer of leaves is covered with a shallow layer of soil (or compost). Always moisten each layer of leaves thoroughly before adding the soil. Shredding the leaves beforehand with a lawn mower will help speed the process of decomposition, but it is not essential.

It makes no sense to send valuable treasure to the dump. Therefore, leaves should be managed and used rather than bagged and placed at curbside to be picked up and hauled to landfills.

