

Gardeners' Checklist for November



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office

November 4, 2020



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

PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson

Few flowering bulbs can surpass the stately beauty of amaryllis. Master Gardeners will conduct an Online Bulb Sale this weekend featuring varieties of amaryllis with traditional red flowers as well as several other colors.

While the calendar indicated that the fall season arrived several weeks ago, gardeners had to wait for a while for some consistent evidence that fall was really going to happen. I experienced two preliminary forms of evidence last week: 1) I had to turn the heater on in my car when driving to work, and 2) I then turned the heating

unit on at home before retiring to sleep.

As the fall temperatures settle in with consistency over the month of November, take advantage of the cool days and the slower pace of gardening to prepare your plants for winter. Be sure to perform any needed activities in the home garden and landscape as follows:

Online Bulb Sale: The Master Gardeners' will offer an Online Bulb Sale this week. A wide variety of bulbs will be offered including amaryllis. Amaryllis is a popular bulb that provides eye-catching color in many local landscapes during the spring season. Few flowering bulbs can surpass the stately beauty





of the amaryllis.

Amaryllis readily adapts to our Gulf Coast landscapes and once established can become a long-lasting part of the landscape with minimal care. The dominant flower color of amaryllis grown in local landscapes is red but many additional flower colors are available. Ten varieties of amaryllis will be offered through the online sale with colors ranging from shades of orange, pink, chartreuse and white as well as red.

Visit the Master Gardener website (<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>) for more information. You may browse through the selections now and plan your preferences. Online orders will be accepted from 8:00 a.m., Thursday, November 5, through 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 7.

Other types of bulbs and tubers will also be available including narcissus, oxblood lily, rainlily, spider lily and summer snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*). These plants are not natives, but they appear to be, since they dependably come back year after year and slowly increase in numbers and flower production.

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 regu-

larly 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. Seedlings should be thinned according to the spacing distance recommended on the seed packet before they attain 2-to-3 inches height. 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.

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.

