

Horticulture Tips

November 2006

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR NOVEMBER!

David Hillock

Lawn & Turf

- Fertilize cool-season grasses like fescue with 1 pound nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft.
- Continue to mow fescue as needed at 2 inches and water during dry conditions.
- Control broadleaf winter weeds like dandelions. ([F-6601](#))
- Keep falling leaves off fescue to avoid damage to the foliage.

Tree & Shrub

- Prune deciduous trees in early part of winter. Prune only for structural and safety purposes.
- Wrap young, thin-barked trees with a commercial protective material to prevent winter sunscald.
- Apply dormant oil for scale infested trees and shrubs before temperatures fall below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Follow label directions.
- Continue to plant balled and burlapped trees.
- Watch for arborvitae aphids, which tolerate cooler temperatures in evergreen shrubs.

Flowers

- Tulips can still be successfully planted through the middle of November.
- Leave foliage on asparagus, mums, and other perennials to help insulate crowns from harsh winter conditions.
- Bulbs like hyacinth, narcissus and tulip can be potted in containers for indoor forcing.

Miscellaneous

- Leftover garden seeds can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer until next planting season. Discard seeds over 3 years old.
- Gather and shred leaves. Add to compost, use as mulch or till into garden plots.
- Clean and store garden and landscape tools. Coat with a light application of oil to prevent rusting. Drain fuel tanks, irrigation lines, and hoses. Bring hoses indoors.

Fruits & Nuts

- Delay pruning fruit trees until next February or March before bud break.
- Harvest pecans and walnuts immediately to eliminate deterioration of the kernel.

Oklahoma State Pecan Show 2006

Becky Carroll

Be sure to get the word out to everyone to enter their best pecans in the state show this year. There will not be any qualifying regional or district pecan shows this year. However, some county/area shows will be held at the discretion of the County Extension Educator. Growers are encouraged to participate in county shows if available. Winning entries from county shows will be sent to the state show. If no county/area show is available, growers may enter pecans directly by sending samples to Becky Carroll, 360 Ag Hall, OSU, Stillwater, OK 74078. Samples should arrive by January 12, 2007.

Samples should be entered in a sealed plastic or paper bag. Label the bag on the outside and place a label inside the bag. Information should include exhibitors name and address, county, and type of pecan entered. Be sure to follow the guidelines that are listed below before sending entries.

A few helpful hints: Take the time to select pecans that are all the same cultivar, or same size and shape natives – don't send mixed pecans. Select uniform, clean, uncracked pecans. Presentation can make the difference between two very similar samples. Make sure to send 2 pounds of pecans in a labeled and sealed bag.

General Rules and Guidelines

- All entries must be grown in Oklahoma during the current season.
- Each entry shall consist of 2 pounds of nuts.
- Entries deemed unworthy by the judges will not compete for awards.
- Label each entry as to exhibitor's name, address and cultivar of nuts. If more than one native (seedling) pecan exhibit is made, identify the nuts from separate trees by numbers. Only one exhibit of each cultivar or native tree may be entered by one individual.
- Each entry will compete in one of the following 28 classes:

1. Apache	12. Maramec	23. Success
2. Barton	13. Mohawk	24. Western
3. Burkett	14. Pawnee	25. Wichita
4. Cheyenne	15. Perouque	26. Other Cultivars
5. Choctaw	16. SanSaba Improved	27. Large-Native (seedling)
6. Comanche	17. Schley (eastern)	28. Small-Native (seedling)
7. Graking	18. Shawnee	
8. Gratex	19. Shoshoni	
9. Kanza	20. Sioux	
10. Kiowa	21. Squirrels Delight	
11. Mahan	22. Stuart	
- Each grower is allowed to participate at one county show of his or her choice.
- Each grower is allowed to enter one entry in each show class with the exception of Class 26 (Other Cultivars), Class 27 (Large-seedling) and Class 28 (Small- seedling).

- Each grower may enter one entry from each native (seedling) tree.
- Entries should be shipped or mailed to arrive at the show at least one day prior to the deadline.
- County pecan shows will not be affected by these rules and procedures.
- Only first and second place winners in each class of each county/area show will be eligible to compete in the State Pecan Show. Following each county show, eligible entries will be placed in cold storage, and judged before the Oklahoma Pecan Growers Annual Meeting. At that time, the winning entries will be displayed with awards and recognitions. All entries will become the property of the OPGA.
- First and second place winners in each class at the State Pecan Show will receive ribbons.
- State Pecan Show Special Awards – Trophies will be awarded for the largest pecan entry, the entry having the highest kernel percentage, the champion native and the best entry of the show.
- If a qualifying show is not available, growers may submit entries in accordance with these guidelines directly to the State Show. Entries in the state show must be received by January 12, 2007 at the following address:

Oklahoma State University
 Department of Horticulture & LA
 Attn: Becky Carroll
 360 Ag Hall
 Stillwater, OK 74078

Pecan Harvest Has Started

Eric T. Stafne

The pecan harvest for 2006 has started in Oklahoma. Estimates of the crop for Oklahoma stand in the 15 to 19 million pounds range, which is down somewhat from last year. The excessively hot and dry conditions were definitely tough on the pecan trees this year. Irrigated pecans did quite well, even though size may be a little smaller than normal. Non-irrigated papershells are one-half to one-third of normal size in many locations and may not have filled out properly. Natives are very small in most cases this year. The one good thing that can be said for the dry weather was that pecan scab levels were very low. Pecan weevil was somewhat more bothersome than expected. Usually, dry weather is not conducive for the emergence of pecan weevils from the soil; however, that did not seem to be a great issue and the season was long enough that many growers had to make several (up to 5) sprays to control them. Prices are high again this year, so if someone has quality nuts, money can be made. The holiday season from October through December is when pecan demand is the highest and when the best prices can be had.

Often folks with native pecans want to harvest nuts, but have no idea where to sell them. A list of buyers is listed on our website: <http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/pecan/images/pecanbuyers.pdf>

This list is not all-inclusive, but does give a starting place to look.

Fall Cleanup

David Hillock

As plants in the landscape go dormant or are killed off by colder temperatures, it is a good time to do some fall cleaning in the landscape.

Leaves falling from trees are a good source of mulch and compost. In wooded areas where there is little understory growth it is best to leave the leaves to decay naturally. If there are groundcovers or turfgrasses growing in the area then it is best to remove the leaves and compost them or use them as mulch.

Most landscape debris can be chipped or ground up to be used in compost piles or as mulch. However, if plants have been plagued with diseases and insects it may be best to remove them completely from the garden by burning them (if allowed in your community) or sending them off to collection facilities. Debris infected with diseases or insects remaining in the landscape will only become a source for infection next year.

Sanitation is an important step in reducing outbreaks of pest problems. A good example is the twigs that frequently fall from trees like pecan. It is very possible they are infected with the larvae of a twig girdler. Larvae overwinter in the dead twigs, eventually pupating in the twig and emerging as an adult next summer. Another good example is the numerous foliar diseases that also overwinter on dead leaves and debris only to spread to new growth the following spring. Removing these organisms from your garden will reduce the chances of them recurring the following year.

Another practice during the fall and winter months that helps keep pests at bay is occasionally tilling fallow ground. Flower or vegetable beds that remain empty during the winter months can be tilled just before freezing temperatures. Hibernating insects are brought to the surface where they will be exposed to and killed by the cold temperatures.

Terrariums

David Hillock

A terrarium, a garden in an enclosed glass or plastic container, is a delightful way to grow a collection of small plants. With proper care, a terrarium will create a humid atmosphere that protects tender, tropical plants that are difficult to grow in the normally dry atmosphere of our homes. Under controlled conditions, a terrarium can also be used to help start new plants from seeds and cuttings.

Materials Needed

Clear, colorless glass or plastic container

Potting medium

Plants

Water

Brightly lighted window

Container

Select a container of clear, colorless glass or plastic. Avoid translucent or colored glass or plastic, as it will limit the quantity and quality of light available for photosynthesis by the plants inside the terrarium. Aquariums, gallon-size jars, spheres, decorative containers and pop bottles are readily available and easy to transform into terrariums.

Potting Medium and Drainage

Good potting medium, purchased from a local garden center, is ideal for terrariums. It is not recommended to use garden soil, as it is too heavy and does not provide adequate aeration or capillary movement of water. Garden soil likely contains weed seeds, insect eggs, and disease-causing organisms. Commercial potting medium has been pasteurized, killing weed seeds, insect eggs and disease-causing organisms. Commercially prepared potting media usually have a starter charge of fertilizer already added to the mix; therefore, additional fertilizer is not needed at the time of planting.

Other materials such as rocks, sand or charcoal are not recommended for drainage as once believed. When layers of such material are used in terrariums, water drainage away from roots is actually hindered. The reason for this is that the potting medium is like a sponge with millions of air pockets. When wet the water is held tightly until the potting medium becomes completely saturated. Only then will the water move to the next layer. By then, there is too much water even for the drainage layer to hold. The plants' roots suffocate in the oxygen-depleted potting medium, rot and eventually die.

Plants

Although many varieties of plants can be grown in a terrarium, one should choose plants that are naturally dwarf, slow-growing, tolerant of high humidity, and tolerant of the low to medium level of light where the terrarium is going to be placed. Choose plants of various textures and colors or shades of green to maximize the visual interest (See [F-6438](#) for a suggested list of plants).

Cacti and succulents are not well-adapted to growth in a terrarium, as it will be too humid. For these plants, a dish garden would be a better choice.

Planting the Miniature Plantscape

A terrarium can be used to grow a specimen of a given plant, or it can be planted with a variety of plants. Consider where the terrarium will be displayed and how it will be viewed. If it can be viewed from all sides, then plan to place taller, vertical plants toward the center with shorter, rounded or prostrate plants around the perimeter. If the terrarium will be viewed from one side, plan to place the taller, vertical plants toward the back with the shorter, rounded or prostrate plants toward the front and sides.

Wash the container, inside and outside, with warm soapy water. Be careful, it can become very slippery! Rinse the container with cool water several times to remove all traces of soap and then dry thoroughly.

To create good visual proportion with the container, add slightly moistened potting medium to a depth of ¼ inch for every inch width of the container; however, it is not necessary to exceed 3 inches deep, except to create a visual berm. Varying the depth of the potting medium provides additional visual interest, and natural rocks and stones can be added to the surface to complete the miniature plantscape.

Gently remove the plants from their pots, avoiding damage to their root systems. Plant the taller, vertical plants first to the same depth they were growing in the pots just removed. Continue planting the shorter, rounded or prostrate plants as you move away from the taller plants. Use caution not to crowd plants against one another or against the walls of the terrarium. Gently adjust foliage of the plants to drape naturally.

Add small amounts of water from a spray bottle set to a coarse stream or from a drinking straw dipped into water to rinse potting medium off foliage and off the inside of the terrarium's walls. Avoid getting the foliage too wet, as it will not readily dry in the terrarium, and could become infected by water-borne bacteria or fungi. Also, be cautious not to overwater the potting medium; it should be moist but not wet. If too much water is inadvertently added, tilt the terrarium so the water forms a pool at its edge and then use a paper towel to wick the excess water away from the potting medium. Wipe the inside walls of the terrarium dry with a soft cloth or paper towel to avoid leaving water spots and then cover with the container's lid or a piece of clear, colorless plastic food wrap.

Establishment & Maintenance

Place the terrarium in the bright light of a window; however, avoid direct sunlight, as it will quickly overheat the terrarium. For more information about plants' need for light, see OSU Extension Fact Sheet [F-6401](#), Growing Under Lights.

It may take a few weeks to establish a "rain cycle" within the terrarium. It is not unusual for the walls of the terrarium to fog the first few days. It may be necessary to partially open the top or briefly remove the lid of the terrarium to vent excess humidity, replacing the cover once the condensation evaporates. The rain cycle results from careful management of the water in the terrarium. Eventually, rather than forming a fine fog on the interior surface of the terrarium, water will condense in a light film and, then, trickle down the sidewalls back into the potting medium. The established terrarium will require additional water only infrequently.

In order to minimize the plants' outgrowing the terrarium, keep the fertility low. Use a fertilizer labeled for houseplants at half the recommended rate and half the recommended frequency. If nutrient deficiency symptoms appear (chlorotic foliage, for example), increase the rate or apply more frequently.

The miniature plantscape of a terrarium can be expected to remain visually in proportion to the container for about one year; however, periodic pruning of aggressive or fast-growing plants may be needed to maintain an aesthetic appearance.

For more information on the subject discussed in this article, consult your local Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service office.

Houseplant Care

David Hillock

With cooler temperatures of fall and winter fast approaching our gardening interest often turns from plants outside to plants indoors. Success with houseplants is governed by one's careful management of light, temperature, water, nutrients, and humidity, along with using the proper potting medium.

Light

Very few plants tolerate dark corners. Most houseplants require the light that would be found within four to eight feet of a bright south window. Some will tolerate a spot very near the window, while others will prefer less light some distance away. Too little light can result in tall, lanky, small-leafed plants. Too much light can cause leafburn on sensitive species like African Violet. If the room is not naturally lit, artificial lights should be used.

Temperature

Most houseplants prosper in a temperature of 65°F to 75°F, but the humidity of the average home is too low to suit them. A plant prospers in relative humidity of about 50 to 60 percent, which is more than most people like.

This can be helped by using a humidifier or by setting the pot on a tray of moist gravel or pebbles. Do not allow the water to touch the bottom of the pot, as the water would then be wicked into the potting medium and keep the plant too wet.

Watering

More houseplants succumb from improper watering than from any other single cause.

In general, most houseplants need to be thoroughly watered and then allowed to nearly dry before the next irrigation. Use tepid water when watering houseplants. Enough water needs to be poured over the potting medium to allow water to drain freely through the drain hole at every watering. If water does not drain out the bottom, rewater until it drains freely. Never leave a houseplant standing in water, as this will cause the roots to rot.

Drainage

Drainage is an integral part of watering a plant. Do not include aggregates in the bottom, since the aggregate actually slows water's movement through a pot.

If a decorative, drainless pot is desired, it would be better to use a "pot within a pot" technique: pot the plant in a container with drain holes and then set that into the larger, decorative pot. Never allow excess water to collect in the outer pot.

Potting Medium

Consult your local garden center, greenhouse or florist for help selecting an appropriate potting medium. It is important that the potting medium has good water holding capacity, yet is loose enough to promote good drainage and aeration.

Fertilizers

The easiest way to fertilize your houseplants is while watering. Select a houseplant fertilizer and dilute according to label directions. Houseplants can be fertilized at every watering with a very dilute rate or fertilized at a slightly higher rate once every third or fourth watering. Do not fertilize as often or as much in the winter, in dimly-lit rooms or in potting mixes that contain soil.

For more information about growing and maintaining houseplants see OSU Extension Fact Sheet [F-6411](#) Houseplant Care.

Star Pine the Mini Christmas Tree

David Hillock

When I got married we lived in a studio apartment where there wasn't much room for a full-sized Christmas tree. Instead of the traditional tree we opted for something a little smaller and manageable – the Star Pine or Norfolk Island Pine.

Not really a pine at all, but a tropical evergreen with needles and a wonderful layered branching habit that can double as a houseplant and a Christmas tree. The branches of star pine are not as sturdy as pines and other evergreens used for Christmas trees so decoration should be light and simple. We used ribbons and beads and other natural materials to decorate our tree. Depending on the size of the tree (from 12" plants packaged and sold specifically for the Christmas season or as larger containerized plants several feet tall) various Christmas ornaments may be used if done sparingly. The traditional Christmas glass balls, which come in many sizes, work very well. Just remember that simplicity is the key as overloading the branches could put undue stress on the plant.

Star Pines do best in brightly lit areas, but out of direct sunlight. A fertile, well-drained potting soil works best for optimum growth. Keep the soil slightly on the drier side, only barely moist. Overwatering will result in yellowing and shedding of the needles. Fertilize every few months with a complete fertilizer. Pests such as spider mites can occasionally be a problem. Spray only when needed and with the appropriate houseplant insecticide.

2006 Oklahoma Cucurbit Vegetable Production and Marketing Educational Meeting

Jim Shrefler

Attention Vegetable Growers and Gardeners! Please mark your calendar for Friday, December 15 and plan to attend the 2006 Oklahoma Cucurbit Vegetable Production and Marketing Meeting. The event will be held at the Grady County Fairgrounds in Chickasha. Meeting time is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will include a complimentary meal.

Dr. Francis Mangan of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Massachusetts will be this year's guest speaker. He will give a presentation titled Production and

Marketing of Tropical Pumpkins for the Large and Growing Ethnic Markets. Dr. Mangan has extensive experience with the production and marketing of the many exotic cucurbit crops used by various ethnic groups in the northeast region of the country. He has interacted extensively with growers, marketers and consumers to learn about the unique characteristics of the many vegetables that are important to different ethnic groups. Learn more about Dr. Mangan's work at www.worldcrops.org.

Additional program topics will include:

- Specialty Melon Trials in Oklahoma in 2006
- Developments and Opportunities with the Oklahoma Farm to School Program
- Updates on Cucurbit Vegetable Pest Management
- Weed Control in Cucurbit Vegetables
- Research Experience in Oklahoma with Organic Cucurbit Vegetable Production
- Oklahoma Mesonet Weather Products that Help with Irrigation Scheduling
- And much more!

This event should be of great interest and value to anyone who grows or markets pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, etc. It is intended for all growers ranging from those producing for home use and farmer's markets to produce stand operators and shippers. Be sure to receive a meeting flyer by calling (580) 889-7343 or send an email request to jim.shrefler@okstate.edu.

Master Gardener Corner

David Hillock

Horticulture Industries Show (HIS) - January 5-6, 2007. Planning for HIS is underway and program and preregistration forms will be mailed late November – early December. This year HIS will be held in Fort Smith, Arkansas at the Holiday Inn Convention Center. All Master Gardeners (MG) are invited to attend. If you are a returning MG you can receive Continuing Education hours that will count towards the minimum 20 hours you need to keep active status. Remember, however, that only the time actually spent in class counts as training received. Travel and in-between times do not count.

Though we do offer a MG/Public Garden session, you may also choose from any other session offered during the conference. There are 8 commodity groups represented during HIS all conducting seminars, workshops and business meetings. You may choose from any of the following groups - Vegetables, Fruit, Herb, Sustainable Ag, Farmers Market, Master Gardener/Public Garden, General and Christmas Tree.

The theme for this year's program is "Horticulture for Food and Fun." Topics for the MG/Public Garden session on Friday includes Unusually Inspired Vegetable (and Fruit) Gardening; Wine as a Food, a 6th Generation Growers Perspective; Garden Whimsy; Winter Beauty in the Landscape; and How to Have an Award Winning Design and Update of UA Ft. Smith Botanical Garden. Topics for Saturday include "Going to the Chapel" and More at Garven Woodland Gardens; Metamorphosis: Changing Children's Lives with Butterflies; Hosta Diseases; A New Gardening Experience in NW Arkansas; and Edible Landscaping.

2007 State Master Gardener Conference

Plans are underway for next year's State Master Gardener Conference to be held in Claremore at the Claremore Expo Center on June 8, 2007 with a preconference Evening Social on June 7. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. The Rogers County Master Gardeners are hosting the conference and are working hard to make this conference another fantastic one!

Upcoming Horticulture Events

Tree Care Workshop

November 14, 2006

OSU Botanical Garden, Stillwater, OK

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Christina Wells, Clemson University

Keynote Lectures:

Influence of Planting Depth on Landscape Tree Survival and Girdling Root Formation

Viability and Infectivity of Mycorrhizal Products Marketed for Landscape Trees

Poinsettia Open House

December 6, 2006

OSU – Stillwater Research Greenhouse

AR-OK Turfgrass Management Short Course

January 25-26, 2007, Fayetteville, AR

Master Gardener Continued Training Conference

June 8, 2006, Claremore, OK

Summer Gardenfest

June 9, 2007, OSU Botanical Gardens

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu.