

Horticulture Tips

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

GARDEN TIPS FOR SEPTEMBER!

David Hillock

Landscape

- Watch for fall specials at garden centers and nurseries since fall is a great time for planting many ornamentals.
- Choose spring flowering bulbs as soon as available.
- Plant cool-season annuals like pansies, ornamental cabbage or kale, snapdragons and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.
- Watch for and control any late infestations of tree webworms.
- Twig girdler insects should be controlled if large numbers of small branches of elms, pecans or persimmons are uniformly girdled from the tree and fall to the ground.
- Begin to reduce the amount of light on outside tropical houseplants by placing them under shade trees before bringing them indoors for the winter.

Vegetables

- You have all of September to plant cool-season vegetables like spinach, leaf lettuce, mustard and radishes, and until the middle of September to plant rutabagas, Swiss chard, garlic and turnips.

Lawn

- Last nitrogen fertilizer application of the year on warm-season grasses should be applied no later than September 15. ([HLA-6420](#))
- Winter broadleaf weeds like dandelion will begin to emerge in late September, which is also the best time to control them with a 2, 4-D type herbicide.
- If pre-emergent control of winter-annual weeds (henbit, chickweed, annual bluegrass, etc.) is desired in lawns, the application should be completed by the 2nd week of September. ([HLA-6421](#)) *Note: Do not treat areas that will be seeded in the fall.*
- Continue bermudagrass spray program with glyphosate products for areas being converted over to tall fescue this fall. ([HLA-6421](#))
- Plan to seed bluegrass, fescue or ryegrass as needed in shady areas in mid- to late-September. Fall is the best time to establish cool-season lawns ([HLA-6419](#)).
- White grub damage can become visible this month. Apply appropriate soil insecticide if white grubs are a problem ([EPP-7306](#)). Water product into soil.

Fall Fertilizer Tips for a Healthy Lawn

Justin Quetone Moss

Proper fertilization can benefit turfgrass if applied according to certain recommended procedures. Bermudagrass is a warm-season grass with the majority of root growth occurring during the summer months. Cool-season grasses such as tall fescue may lose roots during the hot summer months, but the fall and spring are crucial for root growth. A lawn with a healthy root system will be better equipped to survive moisture and temperature extremes than those with poor root systems.

It is not necessary for homeowners to fertilize bermudagrass or zoysiagrass after early September in Oklahoma. Late, heavy applications of fertilizers containing Nitrogen can actually be detrimental to bermudagrass and zoysiagrass health by encouraging lush shoot growth which can sometimes lead to severe disease and/or winter injury.

Cool-season lawns such as tall fescue can benefit from a mid-late September fertilization with Nitrogen at a rate of 1 lb of actual Nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. The following are a few tips to remember when fertilizing your lawn.

1. Always be sure to conduct a lawn soil test before applying fertilizers to your yard. You can refer to the soil testing collection procedures and fertilizer schedule as outlined in OSU Extension Fact Sheet [HLA-6420](#).
2. Always use properly calibrated fertilizer spreading equipment. For a good calibration starting point, you may wish to purchase a name brand or local retail brand fertilizer and an accompanying fertilizer spreader. The fertilizer bag will often tell you the proper setting on your fertilizer spreader for proper application of fertilizer to your lawn.
3. Use fertilizers with a mixture of quick-release and slow-release nitrogen sources. Examples of quick-release (also called water-soluble) nitrogen include urea, ammonium nitrate, ammonium sulfate, diammonium phosphate and potassium nitrate. Examples of slow-release (also called water-insoluble) nitrogen sources include methylene ureas, IBDU, urea formaldehyde, sulfur-coated urea (SCU) and polymer coated urea (PCU).
4. Do not apply fertilizer to impervious surfaces such as sidewalks and driveways. If fertilizer gets on these surfaces, use a broom or blower to remove the fertilizer from the surface. Fertilizers left on the driveway or sidewalk are an environmental concern because they can easily runoff into drains or ditches.
5. Lightly water-in fertilizers immediately following application. Do not apply fertilizer to your lawn immediately before heavy rainfall or deep irrigation.

If you have further questions about fertilizing your lawn during the fall, contact your local OSU County Extension Educator.

Moving Houseplants Indoors

Kimberly Rebek

If you brought houseplants out into the summer sunshine, you want to start thinking about preparing them for their return journey indoors. As a rule of thumb, you will want to move houseplants indoors around the time that the outside temperature is about the same as that indoors. This will give plants a chance to adjust to the indoors before you turn on the heat and avoid unnecessary cold damage to tropicals.

Moving a plant directly from its perch on the sunny patio to its winter home in the dark living room is not advisable. You will shock the plant with the drastic change in light conditions. Instead, you need to acclimate the plant or slowly adjust it to lower light levels. You can do this by moving your plant to more and more heavily shaded areas over the course of a week before finally bringing it inside.

But before you bring plants indoors you will want to check for insects. Many garden pests are transferred indoors with houseplants, where they move out to attack other houseplants or become nuisance pests. Inspect your plants and pots for insects and other invertebrates. Be sure to remove the plants from their pots, because beetles, slugs, pillbugs and centipedes will live in the soil around the base of the pot. Also check between the pot and the saucer, another favorite hiding place.

Inspect the foliage and stems closely for pests. Aphids, mealybugs and scales can all move indoors unseen on houseplants, where their populations can explode. If you find these insects, wash them from plants with a heavy stream of water or treat plants with an insecticidal soap. Always read product labels to make sure the soap is compatible with the plant you are treating. You may want to isolate treated plants from your other houseplants for a few weeks until you have determined the pests to be under control.

Drying Cockscomb Flowers

Kimberly Rebek

With the summer heat our Cockscomb (*Celosia argentea cristata*) plants are blooming prolifically. Celosias have three different flower types, each in many bright colors:

- Crested type: these have wavy, brain- or coral-like flowers
- Plume type: upright, airy textured flowers resemble flames
- Wheat type: flowers resemble those of wheat, lighter, more open

All of these flowers are excellent for use in dry arrangements. It is important to harvest flowers at an ideal time for drying. For crested types, harvest when the center of the flower head has expanded but before the outer edges begin to discolor. For plume and wheat type flowers, harvest flowers when 50% of the blooms have opened. Late harvest of flower heads will allow the development of seed; however, if you intend to collect seed, you will want to wait for a later

harvest. For many arrangements, seed is undesirable, as it can be messy if it is not all removed. The seed can be removed by simply shaking dried heads upside down. When harvesting flowers, cut at a point where 2 to 3 leaves remain on the stem. Smaller, secondary flowers can be used for crafts or potpourri.

It is best to dry celosia flowers quickly for best color retention. Air-drying is the most common method. Gather cut material into bundles and tie with string, then simply hang the bundles upside-down to dry in a warm, dry, dark location.

Water drying is another method that can be used with celosia. Place cut flowers in a vase with a couple inches of water covering the base of the stem. Place the vase in a warm, dry, dark place and allow the water to evaporate and be taken up by flowers.

Celosia is a very tender annual, be sure to cut flowers for drying well before frost to avoid damage.

Top Perennial Plants for the Shade

David Hillock

Below are some of perennial plants that perform consistently well in shady areas of the Oklahoma garden:

Acanthus mollis – Bear’s Breach

This plant is known for its very large glossy leaves that provide textural contrast in the garden. Spikes of purple to white flowers can appear in midsummer, but the real feature of the plant is the striking foliage; variegated forms are also available.

Aegopodium podagraria – Bishop’s Weed

The word weed in the common name of this plant does describe its ability to spread quickly, but this can be a good thing if you just need something to cover a large area. The variegated leaves of bright green edged with white are very attractive and really brighten up a darker area.

Ajuga reptans – Carpet Bugleweed

The bugleweeds are excellent mat-forming groundcovers that provide carpets of bright blue flowers in the spring. Several varieties are available with colorful and interesting foliage colors as well such as Burgundy Glow and Chocolate Chip.

Anemone x hybrida – Japanese Anemone

This is a valuable plant because it is one of the few species that shows off in the fall when most other plants have already done their thing. Throwing out sprays of bright pink and white flowers in late summer and fall really add life to the shady garden.

Aquilegia – Columbine

Columbine species are found growing throughout North America as well as other countries throughout the world. *Aquilegia chrysantha* is a species native to the southern states, has large

yellow flowers with long spurs and will grow in sun or shade. They are known for their unique flower structures with backward projecting portions of the petals called spurs, which vary in size and shape depending on species. Hybrid forms are available with large flowers and bicolored petals.

Bletilla striata – Hardy Orchid

The hardy orchid is an attractive and welcoming sight in the spring. Leaves are bright green, long, narrowly linear and have a papery feel. The wiry, leafless stems carry the flowers above the foliage in spring displaying the beautifully purplish pink, orchid-like flowers.

Hakonechloa macra – Hakone Grass, Japanese Forest Grass

Hakone grass grows in dense, mounded clumps about 1 to 1 ½ feet tall. It is a well behaved grass with bamboo-like bright green to yellow foliage. ‘Aureloa’ is a golden form with bright yellow leaves with a slender green line creating a striped pattern. Foliage will turn a pinkish red in the fall as cooler weather sets in.

Helleborus spp. – Hellebores, Lenten Rose (*H. x orientalis*), Christmas Rose (*H. nigra*)

The hellebores are known for their late winter to early spring flowers and evergreen foliage. Older varieties have nodding flowers that are difficult to appreciate unless you lie on the ground and look up. New cultivars have been bred with flowers that stand upright above the foliage so you can enjoy their beauty. Flowers can be white, pale green, pinkish, plum and even spotted. The plant is unpalatable to deer, rabbits, gophers and moles. An Oklahoma Proven Selection.

Heuchera sanguinea – Coral Bells, Alum Root

These North American natives are durable, long lived and attractive plants that bloom in late spring to early summer. The wiry stems hold tiny flowers above the foliage appearing as misty sprays of color. However, the flowers are not the only part of this plant that is showy; the leaves can be equally attractive exhibiting various colors and patterns. In mild climates they are evergreen. Mulch after the ground has frozen in early winter to control heaving.

x *Heucherella*

X Heucherellas are a cross between *Heuchera* (Coral Bells) and *Tiarella* (Foam Flower). This intergeneric cross results in spectacular plants that join the exotic leaf colors of *Heuchera* with the delicate flowers and beautiful cut leaves of *Tiarella*. Many cultivars exist.

Ligularia spp. – Ragwort

Ragwort is happy in moist to wet soils and is largely grown for its interesting foliage colors and textures. Flowers are daisy-like, bright yellowish-orange providing some unexpected eye-popping color in late summer to fall. Several cultivars are available displaying interesting foliage that may be purple, spotted with yellow, crinkled, variegated or wavy.

Stylophorum diphyllum – Celandine Poppy, Wood Poppy

Celandine Poppy is native to the eastern half of North America and the Ozark region of Arkansas. It does require moist soil and in drier areas it will die down in early summer. If adequate moisture can be supplied it will continue to grow into the fall. The bright yellow

flowers are about 2 inches wide and appear in early spring. The yellow sap was used by Native Americans as a dye.

Tricyrtis hirta – Toad Lily

Toad lilies are known for their very unique flowers. Flowers are pale lilac with dark purple spots that appear on upright arching stems late summer to early fall when many other plants are beginning to wind down. Though flowers are quite unique, they are small so place toad lily in a spot where the flowers can be appreciated up close. The plant grows 2 to 3 feet high and about 2 feet wide with bright green leaves. Toad Lily is easy to grow, resistant to deer, somewhat drought tolerant, but grow best in moist soils and will even tolerate wet conditions. Several cultivars with varying flower colors are available. An Oklahoma Proven Selection.

New Website Provides Information on Using Pesticides Responsibly

David Hillock

RALEIGH, NC – A new website for pesticide stewardship provides one-stop shopping for anyone who needs to use a pesticide—and wants to know how to use it properly.

Located at <http://pesticidestewardship.org>, the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship (PES) website contains information about pesticide use, storage, disposal and handling. It also includes downloadable applicator forms and references to federal laws about pesticide use.

Coordinated by the Center for Integrated Pest Management at North Carolina State University, the site is the result of a national collaboration. Land-grant universities from four states, including New York, North Carolina, South Dakota and Washington, along with various other organizations interested in pesticide stewardship, have committed to work together to develop, review, and fund the content (see <http://pesticidestewardship.org/Pages/About.aspx>). The site is housed and maintained at Cornell University.

“We felt it was important to coordinate both the development and funding of this site to have a ‘one stop shop’ for anyone needing information on protecting the environment while using pesticides,” says Tom Melton, director of the Center for Integrated Pest Management.

The site provides information for everyone from the most basic user to the more experienced applicator or grower. A separate section is included for homeowners.

“Our ultimate goal is to cover the basic tenets that apply regardless of who you are, where you live or the pest you’re trying to control,” says Wayne Buhler, PES national coordinator and a Pesticide Safety Education Program coordinator with NC State University. “There are fundamental principles and practices to be aware of whether you are protecting agricultural crops, homegrown vegetables, a lawn or golf course. We hope that whenever the choice is made to use a pesticide, good stewardship practices will be followed.”

Organizations that partnered to build the site are continuing its expansion. Currently in the works is a section for pesticide resistance management. Future plans include educational quizzes to

reinforce important stewardship concepts and self-assessment tools to evaluate personal stewardship practices.

10 Stewardship Tips from the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Website

1. Read the label before buying the pesticide.
2. Buy only the amount of pesticide needed for one season.
3. As a general rule, the temperature inside the storage area should not get below 40°F or over 100°F.
4. Calibrate equipment carefully to assure that the pesticide is applied at labeled rates.
5. Be aware of the current and probable future weather conditions in order to make the best application decisions to prevent drift.
6. Locate the mixing/loading site away from wells, streams and lakes.
7. Never leave a tank while it is being filled, and pay constant attention during filling to prevent overfilling and spilling of the pesticide on the ground.
8. When you empty a container, allow it to drain into the spray tank for 10 seconds after it begins to drip.
9. Remember that exceeding the label rate of application is a violation of the law.
10. Follow the label each time you mix and use the pesticide, and follow the label when storing or disposing of the pesticide. Do not trust your memory.

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So You Want To Grow Grapes?

Eric Stafne

An educational seminar entitled, “So You Want to Grow Grapes?” will be held on Saturday, October 9 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Cimarron Valley Research Station, 10820 S. Jardot in Perkins, Oklahoma. The program will include a general overview of what it takes to grow grapes in Oklahoma. Topics will include site and variety selection, vineyard management, insect and disease control, fruit quality, harvest timing, and a panel discussion with current growers. A visit to the research vineyard will also be included. Light food and drink will be provided by the Lincoln County Grape Growers Association. All attendees will receive the recent Oklahoma State University publication “Handbook to Oklahoma Vineyard Establishment and Management”, “A Pocket Guide to Oklahoma Grape Diseases, Insects, and Other Disorders”, copies of all presentations, and other great industry information. The registration fee is \$25 per person and must be received by October 4, 2010. This seminar is limited to 50 participants. Payment via credit card is preferable, but payment by check is also possible. Contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 for more information on payment and registration or visit <http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/events/grapes/index.htm>.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

September 8, 2010

Turf, Nursery and Landscape Field Day
Botanic Gardens at OSU, Stillwater, OK

For more information, please visit http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/events/pdf/2010_FieldDay.pdf.

September 23 – November 11, 2010

Oklahoma Market Gardening School
Antlers Community Building, Antlers, OK

For more information, please visit
<http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/events/pdf/2010okmarketingschool.pdf>.

October 13-14, 2010

Ornamental Plant Materials Conference
Wes Watkins Center, Stillwater, OK

November 3, 2010

Tree Care Conference
Botanic Gardens at OSU, Stillwater, OK

December 9, 2010

Global Horticulture Conference
Stillwater, OK

January 14-15, 2011

Horticulture Industries Show
Fort Smith, Arkansas

April 14, 2011

Gardening with Disabilities
Stillwater, OK

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