Horticulture Tips
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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.
- 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 and containerized 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.

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.

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.

Gold and Silver Plant

David Hillock

An underutilized groundcover in Oklahoma is a plant known as ajania (*Ajania pacifica*), sometimes called pacific chrysanthemum (Synonyms – *Chrysanthemum pacificum* and *Dendranthemum pacificum*). Ajania is a cousin to the chrysanthemum known largely for its silver-edged foliage rather than the flowers, though it does bloom late in the season with dozens of small, golden yellow flowers, thus the other common name of Gold and Silver plant.

Ajania provides interest to the garden from spring until the first killing freeze, though in milder climates it can be semi-evergreen. Serving as a groundcover it provides colorful, deep green leaves with rounded lobes, a silver margin, and a silvery color on the underside. The numerous small, button-like, golden yellow flowers open in early to mid November in Stillwater. Ajania has no serious insect or disease problems, but wet soils can be detrimental. It grows in average soil moisture, well-drained soils, and full sun to part shade. It forms a mound about 18” to 24” high and spreads to about 3’ by rhizomes. Ajania is a hardy perennial to zone 5. Grow ajania as a groundcover, in rock gardens, in the foreground of perennial borders, or in containers.

Applying Dormant Oils for Winter Insect Control

Kim Toscano

For home gardeners and fruit growers an important insect management tool is dormant oil application. Dormant oil is a refined petroleum product formulated for use on trees and shrubs. This refers to the time of application which should be late winter or early spring. Applications should be made when temperatures are above freezing and before bud swell and bud break, before new growth forms. Ideal temperatures are between 40 and 70 degrees. If applied too early, before hardening off, the trees can sustain winter injury. Also, if the temperature is too low the oil will not mix well in solution and you will not get adequate coverage needed to control overwintering insects. Late February through March should be a good time to make these applications, although check the weather and make sure there will not be any freezing temperatures or rain for a few days after applications.

Dormant oils control scale insects, aphids, and mites that are overwintering on the trees. The oil must be applied with enough water to get thorough coverage (read label recommendations). Coverage is very important so that the spray can reach in between the cracks and crevices of the bark where many insects hide. The oil coats the insects and fills the spiracles. Insects use their spiracles to breathe so when they are blocked they smother. Dormant oils will suppress insects by killing overwintering adults and eggs which will slow the seasonal build up in the spring.

This is well worth the extra time. Some insects controlled by dormant oils include aphids, scales, and mites.

Applications should be made to apples, pear, plum, pecan and crabapples. Peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums often do not require dormant oil sprays but if certain insect pests have been an issue in the past it could be beneficial. Dormant oils can also be beneficial for shade trees and woody ornamentals. Consult your label before application to make sure the plant is listed. Some plants are sensitive to dormant oil applications.

Precautions: Do not apply too early or too late. Avoid temperature extremes. Avoid using on plants that are oil sensitive. There will be a list on the label.

Dormant oils will kill annual flowers; do not make applications to trees close to annuals. Do not apply in combination with sulfur containing pesticides such as captan. This will cause plant injury.

Benefits far outweigh the negatives. It is fairly inexpensive and less toxic than other sprays used to control these pests with little toxicity to birds and mammals. This will provide your plants with a jump start into spring.

Dormant oils can be purchased at any garden center and are relatively inexpensive. Remember to read the label and follow all label recommendations!

Harvesting and Curing Sweet Potatoes

Lynn Brandenberger, OSU Extension Vegetable Specialist

Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) is in the morning glory family and although it is grown as an annual root crop, it is actually a perennial. This crop is thought to have originated in Central and South America and does well in hot climates, must be why it does well in Oklahoma. Unlike some other root crops, sweet potato supplies high levels of Beta carotene and vitamin C especially the orange cultivars and of course it has lots of carbohydrates and fiber (Peirce, 1987).

In the home garden sweet potato does well in the summer once we've entered the "WARM ZONE" of June through September. One point to consider is the longer sweet potato has to grow the better it will size up. One of my friends that grows commercially noted two weeks can make all the difference in size, i.e. the difference between # 1's >2"-3 1/2" and Jumbos >3 1/2" diameter roots. Most gardeners will want to grow for the easy to handle #1's, but if you're into big, some jumbos can weigh in at 10-15 lbs. That's a lot of sweet tater! Bottom line is don't harvest too early if you want your sweet potatoes to size up, since they continue to grow until first frost. Unlike above ground vegetables there can be some mystery about when to harvest. There are two ways to approach deciding when to harvest. First you can do exploratory digging to see what's going on under the soil surface. I like using a forked garden spade for this because if I'm careful I won't damage as many of the roots as with a non-forked spade. Just carefully dig into the side of the sweet potato bed or row and then using your fingers start looking for taters. If they are still relatively small, just push the soil back around them and let them go a while longer.

The other method basically is letting the crop continue to grow until first frost. It's important that as soon as possible (ASAP) after the first frost has occurred that you dig and then sort for curing. Note: ASAP means the same day as the first frost, not a week or two later. This method will maximize the yield of your sweet potatoes. Note: don't wash your sweet potatoes until it's time to prepare them for cooking, just knock off as much soil as you can before curing them.

Curing. . . what in the world is that about? Well think about it, if you are wounded you need to be cured, sort of works the same way with sweet potatoes. During harvest sweet potatoes will be wounded i.e. skinned up, broken off from the main root, etc. and those wounds can lead to all sorts of infections i.e. rot diseases developing on the roots if the roots are not cured properly. Curing also helps convert sugars that are in the root at harvest to other forms of sugar that allow the root to store longer and improve its cooking quality. The key components of curing include the following:

- Curing conditions:
    - Warm temperatures: 85 to 90°F
    - High relative humidity: 90-95%
    - Good air flow: using a fan to keep the air moving
    - Time: 8 to 10 days

- Storage conditions:
    - Ideal temperatures: 55-60°F
    - Relative humidity: 85-90%

We cure our trial sweet potatoes in open plastic bins inside a building using an electric heater to bring the temperature up, an inexpensive humidifier like you use when you're congested, and an old box fan to keep the air moving. That's it! We just keep the water topped off in the humidifier and keep everything else running 24-7 for at least 8 to 10 days and we're done. After that we will store them at room temperature which isn't ideal, but this past year they were still looking good in early June after having been harvested and cured the previous October.

For more detailed information about harvesting, curing, and storing sweet potatoes check out these references:

- Vegetables characteristics, production, and marketing
    - By Lincoln C. Peirce, John Wiley and Sons, 1987

- OSU E-995 Oklahoman's guide to growing fruits, nuts, and vegetables
    - Available from OSU department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

- OSU Fact Sheet HLA-6022 Sweet Potato Production
    - Available at: http://www.oces.okstate.edu/extension-fact-sheets

OKLAHOMA STATE PECAN SHOW 2013

Becky Carroll

It's that time of year again! Remember to save back a couple of pounds of your best pecans to enter 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. 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 Oklahoma State University, Department of Horticulture, Attn: Becky Carroll, 358 Ag Hall, OSU, Stillwater, OK 74078. Samples should arrive by January 24, 2014.

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 two 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
2. Barton
3. Burkett
4. Cheyenne
5. Choctaw
6. Comanche
7. Graking
8. Gratex
9. Kanza
10. Kiowa
11. Mahan
12. Maramec
13. Mohawk
14. Pawnee
15. Peruque
16. SanSaba Improved
17. Schley (eastern)
18. Shawnee
19. Shoshoni
20. Sioux
21. Squirrels Delight
22. Stuart
23. Success
24. Western
25. Wichita
26. Other Cultivars
27. Large-Native (seedling) 60 nuts/lb or larger
28. Small-Native (seedling) more than 60 nuts/lb

- 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.
- Samples 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, second, and third place winners in each class at the State Pecan Show will receive ribbons.
- State Pecan Show Special Awards – Plaques 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 24, 2014 at the following address:

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

Master Gardener Corner

Horticulture Industries Show (HIS) - January 10-11, 2014. The HIS program is complete and registration forms can be found on-line at http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/his/. This year HIS will be held at the Tulsa Community College NE Campus, Tulsa, OK. All Master Gardeners 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 member 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 offer a MG/Public Garden session, you may also choose from any other session offered during the conference. There are five commodity groups represented during HIS, all

conducting seminars, workshops, and business meetings. You may choose from any of the following groups: Vegetable, Fruit & Sustainable Ag, Farmer's Market, Master Gardener/Public Garden, and Christmas Tree.

The conference theme is "*Improving your Production Toolbox*" with Keynote Speaker Dr. William J. Lamont, presenting *How Plasticulture Revolutionized the Production of Horticultural Crops* and *Tunnels-The Latest Innovation for Extending the Cropping Season*.

Topics for the MG/Public Garden session include: *Rose Rosette,* Jen Olson; *Edible Natives in the Backyard - Fruits, Nuts and Berries,* Clark and Connie Shilling; *LED Technology: A Bright Light for Horticulture Crop Production?,* Bruce Dunn; *Perennials and the Prairie Aesthetic,* Cheryl Mihalko; *Low-tech Green Roofs,* Nicholas Nelson; *Invasive Species Part 1,* John Haase; *IPM Oklahoma – Providing MG's a Hands-on Learning Experience,* Kim Toscano; *2014 Oklahoma Proven Plants,* David Hillock; *Landscape Planning and Design for Water Conservation,* John Schroeder; *Urban Soil Quality Issues,* Malarie Gotcher; *A Comparison of Methods for Constructing a Self Watering System for Container Gardening,* Jim Shrefler; *Low Maintenance Lawns: Myth or Reality?,* Justin Moss; *Observations of Plant Life in China,* Courtney Keck; and *Invasive Species Part 2,* John Haase.