

## **Fall Garden Chores**

By Phyllis Lee

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Even though fall marks the end of the growing season for most plants, it's an important time to prepare your garden for next year. This is the time to renovate your garden or lawn and plant fall vegetables. Here are some tips to get you started.

There are several important steps to take as we enter the fall months to ensure that you have a healthy lawn. Now is the time to fertilize, de-thatch, aerate, or remove lawn to change the architecture of your landscape. Slow release fertilizers are recommended and should be applied once in September and then again in October when the hottest days are past. Read the label and follow the application rate using caution to not over apply and burn your lawn. Did you know that if you have been grass cycling, using a lawn mower that can be set to mulch lawn cuttings back onto the sod; it reduces your need for fertilizer by twenty percent? Remember to reset/reduce your irrigation times now and then again at the end of fall. Our website: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/TOOLS/TURF/> has everything you need to know for lawn care.

Autumn is a great time to make changes in your landscape. The soil is warm, and the root growth attained now combined with additional growth in the spring helps the plant survive the heat of summer. Also, cool-weather annuals like snapdragons, pansies, and stocks may be planted to add a touch of color during the winter months. Now is the time to plant your fall/winter season veggies. These include: broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cilantro, lettuce, and parsley for harvesting beginning in November. Onions, garlic, spinach and kale may be planted in October for harvesting next year. Row covers or enclosures may extend harvest at higher elevations. Before planting, amend the soil with compost and fertilize as needed. Carrots may be intercropped with lettuce and parsley. Check for more ideas on planting at: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/veggies.html>

Then there is the annual clean up around the yard. Check and correct supports that are missing or girdling tree branches or trunks. Check drip lines for clogs. Do emitters need to be moved further away from the trunk of the plant as it has grown? Clean up plant debris and prune out dead or diseased limbs. Most trees, roses, and many perennials won't get their annual pruning until January or February. Replace mulch in your garden to maintain moisture, help with soil structure, protect from frost, and help with weed control. And, don't forget to clean, dry, and apply a lubricant to your tools.

Enjoy the colors, lights, and scents this autumn in your garden. "In the garden, Autumn is, indeed the crowning glory of the year, bringing us the fruition of months of thought and care and toil." Rose G. Kingsley, *The Autumn Garden*, 1905.

On Saturday, September 22nd, Master Gardeners present “Orchids.” Learn how to grow and care for these wonderful plants. The class is offered at no charge and starts at 9:00 a.m. It is held in the Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Dr., in Placerville.

Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome. The office is located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our Master Gardener website at [http://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC\\_Master\\_Gardeners/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/). Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at <http://ucanr.edu/mgenews/>. You can also find us on Facebook. Master Gardeners are available to answer questions most Saturdays at the Placerville Farmer’s Market and most Sundays at the El Dorado Hills Farmer’s Markets.

Do you have plastic feed sacks or plant containers to recycle? Master Gardeners will gladly take them at the Master Gardener Office. Call before dropping them off and thank you for the donation.