



## IN THE GARDEN

Sources [Texas Garden Almanac](#) by Dr. Doug Welsh, Professor & Horticulturist/Texas A&M University, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, nc. ([www.fbmg.com](http://www.fbmg.com)) and [A Garden Book for Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast](#) by Lynn M. Herbert and the River Oaks Garden Club.

### Garden Tasks



- \* If you didn't get your flowerbeds and vegetable garden mulched in September, be sure to do it this month. Mulching will trap soil warmth and moisture that will benefit plant roots and reduce winter weeds.
- \* When daytime temperatures are consistently in the low 80s, you can turn off your irrigation system. Plants will only need water every 3 weeks or so throughout late fall and winter. If there is not enough rain, periodically turn on your system manually.
- \* Don't forget to fertilize and water vegetable crops through the fall and winter, just less frequently.
- \* Prepare an area to stockpile those soon-to-fall leaves. A large circle of fencing mesh wire will provide a nice space for storing leaves to use throughout the seasons for mulch and compost.
- \* Pick up, prune, and destroy insect and disease-infested plant materials, including dried fruit on trees, fallen fruit, branches killed by fire blight and any other material that might be harboring insect pests or their eggs and disease spores or bacterial diseases.
- \* Stop feeding your roses this month. Don't cut blooms off except for a few to take indoors. Leaving blooms on will encourage the rosebush to slow its growth in preparation for winter. Dead wood can be cut out, but fungus do not prune heavily until February.
- \* Sprinkle cornmeal around the base of azaleas and camellias to help control fungus.



### What to Plant

- \* October is the time for planting cool-season vegetables. Beets, carrots, radishes, sugar snap peas, turnips, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, mustard greens, onions (multiplying), shallots, garlic, and Swiss chard are some of the many varieties that grow well in the fall. Lettuces and spinach need to wait until later in the month when temperatures are a little cooler.
- \* October is a great time to plant perennial herbs such as oregano, marjoram, thyme, mint, rosemary and chives. This allows the transplants time to develop strong root systems. When spring arrives they'll be ready to go! Perennial flowers such as perennial salvias, phlox, coneflower, rudbeckia, shrimp plant, coreopsis, Chinese ground orchids, Turk's cap, oxeye daisies, fall asters, copper canyon daisies and Mexican mint marigolds can be planted for fall color.
- \* Plant spring bulbs now. Daffodils, paperwhites, jonquils, summer snowflakes and many other bulbs, if planted now, will become established over the winter for a beautiful show in the spring.
- \* Fall foliage plants can also add wonderful color to beds. Try planting ornamental cabbage and kale. The silver-gray color of Dusty miller helps highlight the colors of fall flowers.
- \* Now is the time for planting strawberries in Southeast Texas. Fall-planted berries will produce a bumper crop from late winter to May. Plant in raised beds for good drainage. Water plants twice a day for the first few days, then once a day for another few days to help them get established. Fertilize a week or two after planting.
- \* Start planting those spring-blooming flowers that germinate in the fall and grow slowly over winter, producing beautiful blooms in the spring. Included in this group are bluebonnets, poppies, larkspur, hollyhocks, sweet peas, cornflower and scarlet flax. Prepare the bed well by adding compost. Keep the soil moist to aid in germination. If the days are very warm and sunny, a little shade cover will help as well.
- \* Fall is the best time to plant woody ornamentals such as roses, flowering shrubs, evergreen hedges, flowering trees, flowering vines and shade trees.