

## OCTOBER TO DO LIST

- Please note, most of the information shared here was obtained from Research-based sources (see contributors acknowledgements below), and from individuals who are considered very knowledgeable on a particular subject. While some little tidbits here may be of interest, they should be taken "with-a-grain-of-salt".

(compiled by MG Brian D. Townsend)

*One day, the gardener realizes that what she is doing out there is actually teaching herself to garden by performing a series of experiments.  
This is a pivotal moment. – Margaret Roach*

### 1st WEEK:

Keep your hummingbird feeder clean and full of sugar water. Fall is the best time to observe the colorful birds. Your feeders will not affect the birds' fall migration.

Clean and refill birdbaths regularly. Both the native and migratory birds will be grateful.

Plant perennial varieties of Daffodils immediately.

Fertilize spring-blooming plants to ensure good bud set.

If normally prolific daylilies bloomed sparsely this year, take steps this month to maximize blooms next year. Dig up the plants and separate bulb masses into smaller pieces. Replant 1' apart and 2" deep in soil you have amended with compost.

It is time to apply winterizer fertilizer to St. Augustine, Zoysia and Bermuda lawns.

If you have not applied pre-emergent herbicide to your buffalo grass lawn to prevent cool-weather weeds, do so soon before the seeds begin to germinate.

Unless you have had a soil test that shows otherwise, use a high-phosphate material on azaleas, camellias, quince, bridal wreath, Carolina jasmine, wisteria and others.

Watch for insects and disease on plants. The mild, wet weather encourages lush growth and attracts the pests.

FIRE ANT baits applied now will reduce ants through next spring. (Try a bucket of soap sudsy water on an active mound, the ants hate it!)

Fall is the best time to plant shade trees. Consider bur oak, chinquapin oak, Chinese pistache, cedar elm, Lacey oak, Monterey oak, Montezuma cypress, or Mexican sycamore. - *CF*

With cooler weather, watch for brown patch fungus on lawns. Brown patch shows up as expanding round areas of grass with blades dying at the base. Treat with a product containing PCNB (such as *Terraclor*).

Sprinkling cornmeal on St. Augustine grass suffering with brown patch will have an immediate greening effect. It stimulates beneficial organisms, particularly trichoderma, which gobbles up pathogens. - *HG*

Side dress vegetables with 1 cup of ammonium sulfate, per 100 sq.ft. bed.

With our first cool spell, plant dianthus, calendulas, stock and snapdragons for cool-weather color. – *EO*

Deadhead zinnias, marigolds, salvias and other flowering plants to stimulate more blooms.

Prepare beds for planting cool-season flowers. Well-drained soil is important, and the bed should get at least six hours of full sun for successful flowering.

Get compost bins ready to handle the leaves that will fall soon. \*Contact the Extension office at (210) 467-6575 for information about composting. - *LR*

GRUB WORM damage, if present, will result in loose, dead grass on top of the soil, its runners having been devoured. You should be able to see the grubs (grayish white half-inch fat worms with brown heads and legs, always hooked into a C-shape). Controls, if needed, are *Merit* or *Oftanol* (?), followed by deep watering.

Quarantine container plants that are going to be brought in with house or greenhouse plants to be certain they're free of insects and diseases. Spray only as necessary. Watch drain holes for hiding PILLBUGS, SLUGS and even ROACHES – *NS*

Exposure to light triggers germination of many annual weed seeds so use mulch whenever possible to reduce the amount of labor required to keep your garden weed free. - *TGS*

**Great Texas Garden tips** - This is a super month to install landscape plantings because of available soil moisture, cooler temperatures, and PLANT SALES. \*) October is a super month for planting cool season annuals because the soil is warm and the air is cooler. \*) For a fall garden, Chinese cabbage, celery, collards, garlic, kale, and kohlrabi may all be planted during the month. \*) October is a good month to dig, divide, replant, or plant many spring/summer blooming perennials because of ample soil moisture, cooler air temperatures, and longer available time for them to establish themselves for spring and/or summer bloom. - *DG&DG*

**Native Bulbs** - Each spring the roadsides and prairies across Texas slip into the soft fragrant cloak of native bulbs. Beginning in late February and early March, wild onions spring up and send out their sweet fragrance to attract early nectaring insects and wildflower hunters anxious to see the first blooms of the coming

season. Drummond's onion (*Allium drummondii*), Pink nodding onion (*A. cernuum*), both flowering onions are edible, unlike some other native onion-family plants like *Zigadenus nuttallii*, which can be fatal if ingested. A close non-edible relative, false garlic (*Nothoscotum bi-valve*), an early bloomer, sometimes sending forth sweetly scented white blooms during brief winter warm spells. Wild hyacinths (*Camassia scilloides*) make their show in March. Rain lilies (most common, the giant prairie lily *Zephyranthes drummondii*) bloom after it rains at any time from spring to fall. Copper lily (*Habranthes tubispathus*) pops up in summer and fall. Southern swamp lily (*Crinum americanum*) will bloom intermittently from July to November (referred to as an aquatic lily, it will do very well in most regularly water landscapes). Spider-lilies (*Hymenocallis lirisome* and *H. caroliniana*) bloom from April through July. - CR

**Room for Improvement-** Expert tips on how to avoid costly landscape mistakes!

by: Marsha Murray Harlow and Dr. Douglas F. Welsh (Neil Sperry's GARDENS Mag. Oct.98)

Top 10 Mistakes Texas Gardeners Make:

- 1) Overwatering- Overwatering or improper watering encourages poor root systems and wastes water, should runoff occur. It also stresses plants, making them more susceptible to disease. Roots in waterlogged soil can't breathe; consequently, plants wilt and turn yellow as their roots rot. Eventually, they die.
- 2) Overfertilizing- too much of a good thing causes problems for plants as well as for gardeners. Proper fertilizing nurtures healthy plants that are able to resist pests and environmental stresses. Too much fertilizer may trigger excessive new growth, making a plant more susceptible to disease. That abundant new growth also requires more water and more mowing or pruning.
- 3) Misusing pesticides- A wise gardener knows an insect-free landscape is impossible. The goal is to control the "bad guys" of the insect world and encourage the "good guys". The key is to identify the pest and use an appropriate pesticide. Study your alternatives, and only use them as a last resort, as many are nonselective, so the beneficial insects may be affected, too.
- 4) Improperly identifying a plant problem- Before you choose your weapon, you must know who the enemy is. Put your sleuthing skills to work to determine whether an insect, disease or environmental factor causes the problem.
- 5) Using plants that are unproductive and/or poorly adapted to your area- There are reasons that dogwoods and azaleas flourish in East Texas, but not in the Hill Country. Climate, rainfall, soil types and temperatures divide Texas into gardening "zones", and a smart gardener learns to appreciate what grows well in his/hers own backyard.
- 6) Planting in the wrong place- When placing a plant in your landscape, consider its mature size and its need for sunlight or shade.
- 7) Failing to prepare soil before planting- No matter what type of soil you have, your success depends on whether you amend the soil. Healthy soil is alive with nutrients and microorganisms, and produces healthy plants with few problems (see also "First The Soil" in Feb2do list).
- 8) Failing to use mulch- this layer of organic or inorganic material on top of the soil can work wonders. It helps soil retain moisture, moderates soil temperature, keeps weed populations down, and makes hand-weeding easier.
- 9) Planting at the wrong time- Timing is important when growing vegetables. Not only must you learn which are warm-weather crops and which are cool-weather ones (don't plant broccoli in late spring, for example), you also must consider location (South Texas gardeners plant tomatoes later than gardeners in North Texas).
- 10) Failing to think long-term- Train yourself to plant with a vision of how your landscape will look in five years.

**Turnover compost piles.** Watch for "steam" in morning! Canvass area for more material.

As cool weather approaches and night-time (bed time) relative humidity drops to the 50's, consider a room humidifier for health sake.

Consider herbal extracts to boost your bodies natural immune system (we need care too!) such as:

*Echinacea* (*Echinacea purpurea*, "Purple Cone-flower" root), and/or *Garlic* (concentrated tablets). - me

**In Our Rose Garden:** Some rain and cooler temperatures will help jump-start our roses for some beautiful fall color. To insure this, let's see what's on our agenda for this month.

A. Watering: Lots of tender rose growth means we need to provide ample moisture for our bushes to keep them growing. October can still be warm, even hot at times. So make sure the top 6-8 inches of soil stays moist (not soggy) to keep the tender growth from sun burning. \* Make sure before any type of feeding or spraying that your bushes have been adequately watered (use your finger as your moisture meter).

B. Spraying: 1.) Blackspot and powdery mildew - Maintain a 5 - 7 day spray interval to keep your rose garden free of fungus problems like blackspot. These moist conditions where the foliage stays wet for several hours and warm temperatures are ideal conditions for the germination and spread of blackspot. As the nights cool into the high 50's and low 60's, mildew will also become a problem on all the fresh, tender growth. To prevent this, use a product with *Triforine* (it is a good idea to alternate fungicides to prevent chemical resistance; organics are a good alternative with the cooler weather.) at a rate of one Tbsp. per gal.

of spray, and if blackspot is showing up you can add two tsps. *Mancozeb*. When spraying, make sure coverage is on both sides of the foliage. *Banner Max* or *Compass* are good, but follow directions. 2) Insect Control - a) THRIPS will damage the buds by rasping on them even before the sepals are down. This will discolor the flowers, and in some cases it will even cause the buds to not open. To prevent this, mist buds and flowers with either *Cygon* (?) - two tsps. per gal., *Orthene* powder (2tsp.) or *Orthene* liquid (2 Tbsp.) per gal. \* Don't spray the whole bush; just mist the buds and flowers on three day intervals. b) - CUCUMBER BEETLES makes its appearance as the night temperatures cool. They are looking for a nice place to snuggle up and keep, so they will crawl into partially open buds and flowers, and while they are there they eat ragged holes in the petals. To prevent this, mist the buds and flowers with either *Orthene* powder (2 tsp.) or *Orthene* liquid (2 tsp) per gal. Again, don't spray the whole bush; just mist the buds and flowers on 3-day intervals.

C. Feeding: This is an ideal time to maintain a soluble feeding program. (Keep in mind, whether you are a hard-core exhibitor or not, fertilization containing any kind of nitrogen should stop by mid October.)

Suggestions for this might include the following: 1) Regular Feed Every Two Weeks - Mix two cups of your favorite soluble feed (like 20-20-20) into a clean 32 gal. container (like a trash can). Into this solution add 1 cup of fish emulsion and 1 cup of a chelated iron like *Sprint 330*. Give miniature plants 1 qt. each and your larger bushes 1 gal. each. 2) Show Feed - If you are a rose show fanatic, trophy or hardware hunter, do the following two weeks before the show. Mix 2 cups of *Superbloom* (12-55-6) along with 1 cup of fish emulsion/ seaweed, two cups agricultural molasses, one cup *Sprint 330*. Mix this in a 32 gal. container. Feed each bush and miniature as previously recommended. \*Remember Water - Water - Water!

D. Bush Grooming: You've finished your fall pruning, but we need to keep our bushes clean of small, twiggy growth. As your old blooms fade out, cut them off. \* Old blooms left on the bush are ideal homes for thrips, cucumber beetles, etc. This will help you keep the thrips population curtailed.

**Organic Rose Program** - *HG* (see Feb2do List for complete program)

Roses should only be grown organically since they are one of the best medicinal and culinary herbs in the world. When they are loaded with toxic pesticides and other chemicals, that use is gone, or at least should be. Drinking rose hip tea or using rose petals in teas or salads after spraying with synthetic poisons is a really bad idea. For best results with roses, here's the program:

**Selection**: Buy and plant adapted roses such as antiques, David Austin's and well-proven hybrids (see "How To Grow Roses by San Antonio Rose Society", under Selecting Roses For Our Area). The old roses will have the largest and most vitamin C filled hips. *R.* roses have the most vitamin C.

**Planting**: Prepare beds (1,000 sq.ft.) by mixing the following into existing soil to form a raised bed: 6" compost, 1/2" lava sand; 1/2" expanded shale, 1/2" of decomposed granite, 20lbs. of alfalfa meal, 20lbs. cottonseed meal, 30lbs. of wheat bran/cornmeal/molasses soil amendment, 20lbs. of sul-po-mag. Soak the bare roots or rootball in water with 1 tbsp. of Garrett Juice (or seaweed) per gallon. Settle soil around plants with water - no tamping.

**Mulching**: After planting, cover all the soil in the beds with 1" of compost or earthworm castings followed by 2 - 3" of shredded native cedar. Do not pile the mulch up on the stems of the roses.

**Watering**: If possible, save and use rainwater. If not, add 1 tbsp. of natural apple cider vinegar per gallon of water. If all that fails, just use tap water but don't over water. Avoid salty well water.

**PEST CONTROL PROGRAM**: Add the following to Garrett Juice (visit his web site to get his recipe or pick it up at a local nursery) and spray as needed.

Garlic tea or mild vinegar - 1/4cup/gal. or label directions for minor insect or disease infestations.

Potassium bicarbonate - 1 rounded tbsp. /gal. for minor diseases.

Liquid biostimulants - Use per label - Medina Soil Activator, or similar product.

Neem or plant oil products - Use per label directions for more serious insect and disease infestations.

For thrips, apply beneficial nematodes to the soil in early spring.

Fish emulsion - 2oz. /gal. for additional nutrients (may not be needed when using compost tea)

**SPRAY SCHEDULE**: 1st spraying at pink bud in the spring. 1st two sprayings should include Garrett Juice and garlic tea (additional sprayings as necessary). For best results spray every two weeks, but at least once a month. When soil is healthy, nothing but Garrett Juice is needed.

Parsley increases roses' fragrance, so plant some around your favorite bushes to enhance their sweet smell of success (garlic used as companion plants help deter fungal problems - *me*). - *JB*

**A YEAR IN THE ROSE GARDEN**: by A.J."Pop" Warner

No more fertilizer is needed after Oct. 15. While the writer has demonstrated to his satisfaction that year-round feeding is beneficial, the benefits are not really cost-effective.

Organic mulches added to beds during any month give long-term benefits to the roses. If the old mulch cakes, as sometimes happens with fine-particle materials, stirring with a fork will restore its effectiveness.

Watch for mildew (both downy & powdery) and take steps to stop it quickly. Continue weekly spraying with fungicide on into November. Exhibitors with no visible problems with blackspot will withhold *Maneb* until after the shows. Others may want to reinforce *Triforene* (*Funginex* (?)) with *Dithane M-45* (?), using 1/2 to 3/4 Tbs. per gal.

Mist buds only with an insecticide to control thrips. Misting once a week normally will be enough for most uses, but exhibitors will want to mist them every other day (some treat them once a day). No one insecticide is entirely effective but powdered *Orthene* used at two teaspoons per gallon (1/4 tsp. per qt.) does a good job. Many exhibitors alternate between *Mavrik*, *Orthene*, and *Cygon 2E* (?) and even *Malathion*. Mist all buds; by the time they show color it may be too late. As Indian Summer approaches so usually does dry weather. Water as often as necessary to keep the beds moist. Exhibitors will give extra water.

If one wants nice cutting blooms, disbudding is important. For exhibitors regular disbudding is a must. Finish the new bed and order the new roses.

Take at least one rose to the show. But don't do like this writer sometimes does and try to exhibit the whole garden.

**In Our Herb Garden:** Add compost to your garden as a winterizer and mulch. \* It's not too late to plant frost-tolerant herb annuals or perennials. \* This is the month to plant garlic cloves and onion sets. The Tex. Coop. Ext. Svc. recommends Texas white garlic and 1015 onions. \* Salad groupings and exotic greens should also be planted now. Examples are sorrel, arugula, salad burnet, leaf lettuces, nasturtium. \* Sow wildflower seeds. \* Plant Antique roses. - *Herbs: A Resource Guide for San Antonio*

**Preventative Maintenance for the House: (JWS)**

- 1) Vents in foundation, soffits and eaves: Make sure screens are intact to keep out squirrels and other rodents, birds and insects. Knock off wasp and bee nests from eaves (if close to human activity, otherwise they are beneficial).
- 2) Gutters and downspouts: Scoop out leaves, seedpods and other debris. Flush the gutters and downspouts with a garden hose. Look for pools of water that reveal sags in the gutters. Straighten bent gutter hangers.
- 3) Exhaust fans: Clean the blades. Oil the motor. (\* If you have a computer, it has an exhaust fan and the whole unit would need dusting / cleaning.)
- 4) Air Conditioner: Inside, clean or replace air filter; have furnace inspected (this should be done in late fall). Outside, prune or clear any leaves or shrubbery that is restricting the circulation of air (this should also be done in late spring). \* Refrigerator and freezer coils should be cleaned at least once a year (twice if you have pets) and drain pan cleaned with disinfectant.
- 5) Wood decks: Nail any raised boards and hammer in any popped nails. Refinish with stain or paint if raw wood is exposed. Look for signs of decay and termites in wood near or in contact with the earth.
- 6) Siding: Look for blistered or peeling paint. Decide if it is time to paint your house. Check for popped nails and loose or cracked clapboards. Caulk when necessary.
- 7) Windows: Be sure you have good storm windows and doors. If you don't, this should be a high priority for older fixtures. Also look for any cracks around glass (if glass "rattles", redo the bead), sashes and window (inspect inside and out) frames that could be leaking air.
- 7) Sliding doors: Clean the tracks. Check the locks and tightened the hardware.
- 8) Screens and screen doors: Inspect, repair and clean the screens and screen doors. It may be necessary to paint them before re-installing.
- 9) Fences: Hammer in popped nails (if this is a continual problem, use deck screws instead). Tighten loose posts. Paint or stain if raw wood is exposed.
- 10) Fireplace: Clean and empty the ash pit if the fireplace has one (use ashes in garden or compost pile).
- 11) Water heater: Drain the sediment from the bottom of the tank at the drain cock (remove aerators from faucets inside the house to prevent clogging when water heater is filled). Inspect for leaks (water and gas) or excessive rusting. Consider having tank insulated to reduce heat loss (read instructions and cautions).
- 12) Ornamental iron railings: Sandpaper rusted areas and treat with rust-inhibiting paint.
- 13) Electrical circuit: Identify the fuse or circuit breaker that controls each circuit; make a diagram and affix it near the box.
- 14) Sewer lines: Inspect the grass above the sewer lines. If it is greener than the adjacent grass, it may indicate a leak in the line. Have septic system inspected and cleaned if necessary.
- 15) Power lawn mower: (Read owners manual for instructions, should be done in winter when not in use) Wash or replace the air filter. Replace the oil in the crankcase with new oil. Inspect cutting blade, sharpen monthly and replace when necessary.
- 16) Well water: Take a water sample to a laboratory to test for purity.

Try this if the wasps and bees are flying around while food is out (Their seems to be no scientific study to support this approach). Get some self-sealing plastic bags, fill them with water and put them on the table. The wasps disappear. Some folks say tht the same trick (with partially filled gallon-sized zippered plastic bags) may work to keep flies away. - *J&TG*

Consider planting a green manure or cover crop on part of your vegetable garden this fall. If you select a legume such as vetch, clover or peas, this living layer of plants will add nutrition to the soil by fixing nitrogen as its grows and later adding organic matter to the soil when it shredded and rototilled into the soil. Cover crops also help prevent weeds and can break the cycle of pests and disease that often occur when crops are not rotated. - *TGS*

## 2nd WEEK:

Transplant hardy annuals like Bluebonnet, Flowering Kale, Snapdragon, Johnny-Jump-up, Pinks, Phlox, Violas and Ornamental Cabbage. Plant petunias, dianthus, snapdragons, alyssum and stocks this month; wait on pansies.

Cole crops such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts are tasty, nutritious and easy to grow. Plant them this month for winter and spring production.

Watch for WORMS on tomatoes. Both hornworms and pinworms may be active. Use *Bt* (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), malathion or carbaryl (*Sevin*).

If you have NEMATODES in your garden, forgo a fall crop in favor of Elbon rye to reduce nematodes. The rye makes a good green manure.

Hollies and nandinas are evergreen shrubs for sun or shade. They do not require a lot of water and are not bothered by pests. They also produce winter berries for wildlife.

Paint all wounds on oak trees to prevent oak wilt. - CF

Garlic, parsley, radishes, turnips, rutabagas, mustard, kale and onions can be planted by seed. - EO

**Great Cover-Ups:** (*JMP*) - *Understanding "dew points"* - As air is heated it expands and holds more moisture. If the moisture content of the air is unchanged by weather fluctuations, that air becomes "heavier" or more moisture-saturated as it cools. (Air is capable of holding less and less moisture as it cools.) At some point, the air will no longer be able to hold any more water. Humidity is then at 100 percent. The temperature at which this saturation occurs is known as the "dew point". The temperature at which the dew point occurs varies with the season.

For example, if you're aware that the dew point is currently 35 F, you know that humidity will be 100% at 35 F. If the temperature drops much lower, the result will be fog. Fog, like clouds, is made of tiny droplets of water. The more moisture in the air, the more heat will be retained, or trapped. The drier the air, the greater the heat loss.

The higher the dew point, the less chance of frost. The lower the dew point, the greater the chance. Seldom will you get frost with a dew point of 45 F or above. When the dew point is in the 20's, you're in for a frost unless the daytime high was above 70 F. The kiss of death for plant life in the winter is a night in which stars are shining very brightly, there's no humidity or clouds to block the heat, and no wind to move the air.

*Taking another look at "moon phases"* - One of the keys to predicting the first frost is the moon. Before you laugh this idea off as lunacy, consider the following points: The moon reflects considerable heat from the sun to earth's upper atmosphere during nights when the moon is full. Most of this heat is dissipated and serves to evaporate a haze or to thin heavy cloud formations, which, at times, hold heat near the earth's surface.

Clearing the sky - as a full moon frequently tends to do - allows heat to be lost from the earth by radiation. Late spring and early fall frosts are therefore of more frequent occurrence, on any given date, when the moon is full. Drier times occur generally immediately before or during a full moon, or just before a new moon.

Perhaps the tides have something to do with the quantity of water that evaporates during a new or full moon (or winds coming in from the gulf during the day). Drier times mean frosty times. Once moisture comes in - even if all it does is increase dew points - further critical temperatures will usually not occur until there's some new mechanism to bring drier air back in again. Critical minimum temperature is not only a function of how cold the air is, but also how dry the air is and, to a lesser degree, how moist the soils are.

## 3rd WEEK:

Keep an eye out for the Orionids Meteor Showers. Check out dates when it's due. - *THMag*

Don't give up on tropicals just because we have had some rain and cool weather. We have at least another month of performance from bougainvillea, plumeria, mandevilla and hibiscus. Keep tropicals watered and fertilized.

If you fertilize your houseplants on a regular basis, reduce the application by one-half from now through the winter.

It is wildflower seeding time. Bluebonnet and other wildflower seeds can be planted now. Rake the soil before spreading the seed. Wildflowers will not grow in sod.

For instant color and an easy-to-grow perennial, plant garden mums now in a sunny location.

Tulip and hyacinth bulbs need to be chilled in the refrigerator for 6 to 8 weeks before you plant them.

Purchase the bulbs now. Daffodils can be planted without chilling.

Fertilize tomatoes as soon as fruit begins to set. Use a half-cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer per plant away from the base.

CANKER WORMS are plain gray or brown caterpillars that leave obvious black dropping and feed on petunias, roses, beans and other plants. Use *Bt* (such as Dipel, Thuricide or Bio-worm Killer), carbaryl or malathion to control them.

Pecans that sit on the ground too long spoil quicker than nuts that are collected daily.

Mulch around newly planted trees and shrubs to minimize water use and to maximize growth rate. - CF

Provide Christmas cactus with 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness daily and cool nights for one month to initiate flower buds. – *EO*

Start designing and building new beds for spring. Remove as much grass as possible (Bermudagrass should be treated with an herbicide two weeks before project) before tilling the soil and mixing in compost and organic matter. Raise the beds to the depth you need.

For the best selection, shop now for spring bulbs. Garden Centers, catalogs and Internet retailers offer a variety of choices. Store bulbs that require chilling in the refrigerator away from fresh fruit.

Collect seeds from your favorite plants and store them in a cool, dry place until next year. Label them with the plant name and the place and the date the seeds were collected. – *LR*

With cooler weather, lawns will need less cutting, keep gasoline fresh with a gas stabilizing treatment.

#### **4th WEEK:**

Deeply mulch subtropical perennials like: Chilean Jasmine, China Doll, Firebush, Firecracker Bush, Mandevilla, Mex. Bird-of-Paradise, Plumbago and Poinsetta.

Defoliate Indian-named hybrid crepe myrtles if they are not showing signs of colorful fall foliage.

It is time to preserve gourds. Wash the gourds in warm, soapy water with a touch of disinfectant. Rinse the gourds, then store them for three weeks in a dark closet to set the color. You can varnish the gourds or use them as natural decorations.

If you have not fertilized your lawn, this is the last week to get the job done. Apply 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 sq.ft, which translates to 6 lbs. of 18-6-12 (3-1-2) "winterizer" fertilizer.

Now is the time to apply a copper product such as *Kocide 101* to reduce bacterial diseases on peaches and plums. Follow the instructions.

HORNWORMS are the big, green caterpillars ravaging tomatoes, eggplants, pentas, peppers and nicotiana. Use *Bt* or *carbaryl* (*Sevin*) as soon as you see their damage or droppings.

If you are "blessed" with DEER, plant snapdragons, flowering kale, ornamental cabbage, nicotiana, daffodils and irises for winter and spring color. - *CF*

If lantana and hibiscus plants are infested with WHITEFLIES, apply *Orthene*, *Sevin*, or *Malathion* to the underside of the leaves.

Row cover, a lightweight fabric available at nurseries and garden centers, will help protect tender vegetables. It is sold by various names such as *PlantGuard*, *Gro-Web*, *Plant Shield* and *N-Sulate*.

Prepare beds for pansies. They need well-drained soil and at least a half day of full sun.

Place blood meal in the planting holes to improve vigor of the plants.

Divide and replant perennials such as phlox, hollyhock, iris, day lily and Shasta daisy. – *LR*

One plant to site carefully is the strongly scented rue. Long connected with magic, curses and goblins, many old-fashioned gardeners won't grow it at all. Root secretions have been known to damage brassicas and may prevent basil from growing. Kind of spooky, huh?

Did You know...The color of the moon can point to changing weather conditions. A pale moon hints of rain, a red moon suggests a change in the atmosphere and a bright, white moon indicates fair weather.

Gummosis or the formation of amber gum on the bark of fruit trees may be caused by soil fungi, borers or too much soil moisture. - *TGS*

Should be the end (or near) of RAGWEED season! Week of first freeze in 1917. - *me*

\* In updating this collection of useful tips, I have come across several comments, instructions and chemicals that are being replaced with newer techniques and materials. In some cases, I do not want to change what others have written, but I need to bring "them" up-to-date by putting a "(?)" right behind the point in question and maybe adding my two-cents-worth. – *me*

Many thanks to my contributors for sharing their wisdom so I can learn and share it with you.

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*EO* - Edna Ortiz, Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

*LR* - Lynn Rawe, Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture (visit their website at [www.bexar-tx.tamu.edu](http://www.bexar-tx.tamu.edu)), Texas Cooperative Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

*TGS* – Texas Gardener Seeds, visit their web-site @ [www.texasgardener.com](http://www.texasgardener.com).

*NS* - Neil Sperry, Texas horticulturalist, Publisher "Neil Sperry's GARDENS" and contributor to S.A. Express-News, visit his website at [www.neilsperry.com](http://www.neilsperry.com).

*J&TG* – Joe & Teresa Graedon, The People's Pharmacy

*THMag* - Texas Highways Magazine; visit their web site @ [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com).

*HG* - Howard Garret, aka the "Dirt Doctor" ([www.dirtdoctor.com](http://www.dirtdoctor.com))

*CR* - Charlene Rowell, native plant horticulturist (article from Neil Sperry's Gardens mag. Oct. 2001)

*DG&DG* - Dale Groom & Dan Gill, from Month-by-Month Gardening in Texas

*JWS* – J. W. Salmons, V.P. of the Greater San Antonio Builders Assoc. (courtesy S.A. Express-News)  
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