



October Tips

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

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- Try hanging up your garden tools, such as hoes and rakes, when not in use. Insert a screw with an "eye" into the handle end of each tool. Place nails in a row on the wall, and hang up the tools.
- Buildings and wood fences should be painted as often as necessary to maintain an attractive appearance and preserve the wood. The cool, dry days of fall are an ideal time for this activity. The job will enhance the beauty, usefulness, and value of your property. It also contributes to community beautification and civic pride.
- Stakes and trellises should be dismantled and cleaned for storage. Brush rust from metal items and coat with oil. Discard rotting wooden stakes; those that are still sound should be cleaned and thoroughly dried before storing.
- Taking care of your garden hose this fall will save you from having to buy a new one next spring. Plastic hoses will crack if they are allowed to freeze with water in them. Drain the hose completely and coil it for more convenient storage off the ground.
- If your cold frame is not in use at this time, it may be appropriate to add soil to replace that taken away by transplants. A mixture of two parts garden loam, one part sand, and one part compost or aged manure works well.
- During fall, demand for garden supplies is low, so keep an eye open for special prices on hand tools and power equipment to be given as gifts or used next year.
- Garden tools add up to a large financial investment. Take care of tools so they need not be replaced. Bring all your gardening tools inside. Clean them off. With proper care, quality tools can last you a lifetime.
- If the soil is dry enough before the ground freezes, you can plow. Fall plowing allows earlier planting in the spring and is especially good for heavy soils since they are exposed to the freezing and thawing action of winter that helps improve soil structure.

Monthly Tips have been prepared since 1986 by various staff of the Office of Consumer Horticulture including Ellen Bennett, Michelle Buckstrup, Susan Day, Susan DeBolt, Sharon Dendy, Kate Dobbs, Sheri Dom, David Gravell, Virginia Nathan, Jenny Shuster, Ellen Silva, and Ruth Sorenson. Resource material for the development of this information includes the Virginia Master Gardener Handbook; Extension Publications and newsletters from VCE, numerous other states, and the USDA; and an extensive library of over 900 books, magazines and journals. Project funded by The Virginia Gardener Newsletter subscription fees. Diane Relf, Project Director and Content Specialist.

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