Ask an Expert - October Yard and Garden Checklist

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Fall is officially here, and it's time to put the yard and garden to bed. Here are tips from the USU Extension Gardeners Almanac to help. Included are links to fact sheets and videos for further information.

- Consider adding a smaller structure such as a low tunnel or a larger high tunnel to extend your growing season.
- Learn how and when to harvest winter squash. Store winter squash in a cool, 50-55 F, dry location.
- Plant garlic cloves from mid-October through early November.
- Click here for a list of fall cleanup chores and good landscape practices.
- Remove vegetable plants from the garden once harvest is complete to reduce overwintering sites for insect pests.
- Protect tomatoes from early frost by covering the plants with a blanket or tarp.
- Overwinter carrots, beets and parsnips in ground, by placing mulch over them. This prevents the ground from freezing.
- Rototill leaves, compost and/or manure into the vegetable garden to enhance the soil microbe activity.
- Limit pruning of roses to the heading back of excessively long canes to prevent damage from heavy snow loads.
- Cut back ornamental grasses in snow-prone areas once the foliage has dried down, otherwise leave them until spring and enjoy the vertical accent during winter.
- Plant spring blooming bulbs through early November.
- Planting trees and shrubs in the fall enhances root establishment.
- Dig tender perennials such as gladiolas, dahlias, begonias and canna lilies after the foliage has died down and store them in a cool, 45-50 F, dry location.
- Protect trunks of young trees from winter cracking by wrapping them with a white reflective tree wrap.
- Dig and remove annual flower plantings.
- Plant cold hardy annuals: pansy, primrose, kale and ornamental cabbage.
- Prune out (to the ground) raspberry canes that have fruited.
- Fall is the best time to control tough perennial weeds such as field bindweed (morning glory). Click here for a list of weed control options.
- The last mowing of the season should be 1-1 ½ inches high to minimize disease problems.
- Apply a quick-release nitrogen fertilizer late fall, after the last mowing (late October – early November) for early green up next spring.
- Click here for a listing of the average first and last frost dates in locations around Utah.

Pests and Problems:

- Send diseased vegetable plants and leaves to the local landfill.
- Use burlap or other soft materials to wrap evergreens to prevent snow breakage.
- Treat for Coryneum blight in stone fruits (cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums) at 50 percent leaf drop.
- Clean up and discard all fallen fruit to reduce overwintering sites for disease and insect pests.