

Fall Jobs for the Urban Gardener...

Flowers & Shrubs

- Divide herbaceous perennials and rhubarb crowns
- **Cut down faded herbaceous perennials** and add to the compost heap.
- Lift & store dahlias and **cannas** that have been hit by the first frosts. They can be left to overwinter in the ground. In warmer areas like southern Vancouver Island – they can be left in the ground, covered with a layer of mulch, but this may result in later flowering.
- In mild weather, weeds will still appear. Hoe regularly to keep them in check.
- Apply an autumn mulch to protect plants that are borderline hardy such as *Agapanthus*, *Penstemon* and *Phygelius*.
- This is a good time to dig new flower beds, but don't work on the soil when it's very wet as walking on sodden soil can cause compaction.
- Fall is a great time to plant shrubs and trees. It is also the time to take hardwood cuttings of ornamental shrubs such as *Cornus*, *Forsythia*, *Skimmia*, *Camellia*, *Ilex* and *Euonymus*.
- You can also lightly prune your roses now and cut back tall stems to prevent winter wind-rock damage.
- Fall is an ideal time to **plant roses**. Avoid planting in areas where roses were previously growing to prevent disease spread.
- Now is the time to trim hedges before heavy frosts come.
- Rake & tidy up leaves from around borders and add to the compost heap or separate to make into **leafmould**..

- Garden hygiene helps greatly in the prevention of disease carry-over from one year to the next. Remember to destroy (i.e. do not compost) any infected leaves. Diseases such as **black spot on roses** and **scab on apples and pears** can all to some extent be controlled in this way.
- When planting winter bedding, watch out for downy mildew and black spot on winter pansies. Remove any infected leaves and destroy badly affected plants. Do not plant pansies in the same place year-after-year to avoid the build up of disease.
- Raise **patio containers** onto feet or bricks to avoid them sitting in the winter wet.

Lawn Care

- Aeration: It's not too late to aerate your lawn and increase pores in the soil. This promotes the success of the following treatments.
- Over-seeding: Mix grass seed with some soil in a bucket, add a little water and let the mixture sit for 4 to 6 days. Spread the lightly germinated mixture over the top of bare patches in your lawn.
- Fertilization: Choose a product with a higher percentage of potassium. This promotes resistance to disease, drought and cold. Phosphorous is also important for root growth & lateral plant spread. Nitrogen, on the other hand, promotes vertical growth which is not desirable over the winter months.
- Liming: to counteract soil acidity, fall is the best time to lime as the soil is slowly conditioned over the winter months in time for spring re-growth.

Ref: Autumn Lawn Care, John Keltie & <http://www.rhs.org.uk/index.asp>