



HORTICULTURE DAY

Check out some helpful tips from our London Master Gardeners Denise & Nancy as well as some photos from past Horticulture Creative Arts entries!

FALL COLOUR:

Summer is almost over and the garden has begun to show it's age. The summer blooms have begun to fade but the season is not over for most of us gardeners. We need to look at the garden centres to see what is new and what is in bloom for fall.

Traditionally we see fall mums come out on the market this time of year in their bronzes, golds, reds, purples, and yellows. But they are not the only fall plant available to us. There are the fall asters in pinks, purples, and whites. Or the late blooming anemones that can grow up to 3 feet tall in beautiful shades of pink, burgundy and white. Or the workhorse in any garden, the ever popular drought tolerant sedum. This plant with its red, blue grey, or even green and white foliage can withstand the heat of the summer and burst into bloom late in the fall.

Want something that's really going to make a statement? How about a perennial southern bell hibiscus. With flowers of burgundy, pink, white, and shades in between. These bloom with flowers as big as dinner plates. Then there are the shrubs that bloom late in the season: Rose of Sharon, blue mist spirea, and hydrangeas. These will last well into the first frost.

Then there are the plants with the beautiful fall colours. Those that change like the bright red of a burning bush, the burgundy of a cotoneaster, or the yellow and golds of viburnum. The season is far from over. We still have a few more months to enjoy before old man winter arrives. Don't give up on the garden yet.



PUTTING THE GARDEN TO BED:

Just because Fall is around the corner does not mean that gardeners have taken time to rest. There are still a lot of things to be done in the garden. We need to prepare for winter.



- This means continuously harvesting our fall crops. I like to leave parsnips and carrots in the ground as long as possible. The cold weather will intensify their sweet flavour.
- Remove all the dead leaf matter and discarded fruits and vegetables from the garden. We don't want this to become a place for our insects and pests to winter over.
- Your lawn is important too this time of year. Now is the time to add more grass seed, fix the bare patches, or even put down sod. Remember too, if we don't have heavy rainfall – keep watering the grass until the ground freezes.
- Rake off the fall leaves so that they don't create a heavy mat that smothers out the grass. I know many gardeners who will use their lawn more and will continuously mulch the leaves often so that it becomes small leaf matter that will break down and fertilize the lawns.
- Depending on the weather you may need to cut your grass until the first week of December. Grass should be cut between 4 and 5 centimetres long, it prevents the mice and voles from wintering over and creating awful tunnel damage in the spring.
- What about the begonias, cannas, daleas, and glads growing in the garden? Once the first killing frost has happened and their leaves turn black it is time to dig up these bulbs and prepare them to bring indoors to store for the winter. They will not survive our heavy, cold, freezing winter.
- Remove all the soil from the bulbs, rhizomes or tumors, allow them to dry in the sun for a few hours, then store them flat in a frost free cold storage location. They prefer to be kept in the dark. Check these bulbs throughout the winter to prevent them from getting diseased, beginning to mould, or just drying up.
- Once the spring weather starts you can dig them back into pots, put them upstairs in the sun, water them well and you'll have blooms for next year.
- Glad bulbs can be a little bit more fussy and will need to be protected from an insecticide before they're stored for the winter.
- Most of this happens around mid to late October. I will continue to work in the garden for as long as possible.
- Make sure you stay ahead of the weeds this time of year because you don't want them to go to seed and create a bumper crop of weeds for us next spring.
- Enjoy those sunny fall beautiful winter days in the garden before the blanket of white will bury everything deep.

SEPTEMBER'S HARVEST

The summer season is nearing the end. Many of us have enjoyed tasty vegetables that we grew this year or have purchased at local farmers' markets. But with Fall, it doesn't mean that's the end of local vegetables and fruit.

There is nothing like a serving of fresh beans from the garden. But not all varieties of beans we grow have to be eaten young and fresh. Climbing or pole beans and pea beans are left to mature on the plants. These types of beans are harvested in the fall when their pods swell, are dry and the beans rattle inside the pod. After shelled, they can be spread out to dry more, then put in containers to keep dry to be used in soups or stews in the winter.

Throughout the summer we also enjoyed various kinds of vegetables but there are also later varieties of these certain vegetables. 'Late' varieties mean they take more days to grow and mature before they are harvested in the fall. For

instance, there are late season types of cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli producing better tasting than spring sown plants exposed to summer heat. Brussels sprouts is a vegetable that takes a long time to grow and mature. Typically, it isn't harvested until the fall after a couple of frosts.



Kale has become a popular and easy vegetable to grow in our gardens. Throughout the summer the leaves are picked to be enjoyed in salads, smoothies etc. Kale is a 'cool season' crop and will withstand frost in the late fall. Matter of fact, these hits of frost, sweetens up the leaves.

Most of our root crops – beets, carrots, onions, potatoes – are harvested in September. Rutabagas are harvested in the fall after they have been exposed to frost. Parnips, another root crop, needs a heavy frost or freezing to improve and sweeten the flavour of these roots. It is usually harvested in late fall.

The difference between summer and winter squash is the skin. Summer squash, such as zucchini, pattypan, yellow or crookneck etc, are harvested before they are fully mature and are eaten with the skin is tender and full of flavour. Winter squash such as butternut, acorn, buttercup, delicata etc. are picked when the fruit is mature, and the rind is hard and can be stored for winter.

Who doesn't like a crisp sweet apple in the Fall. So many delicious apples are grown in this region. Old favourites such as Cortland, Empire, Spartan, Idared are great for snacking and cooking. Varieties such as Royal Gala, Fuji and Honeycrisp have become increasingly popular with many families. Depending on the variety, the apple harvest usually is from mid September well into late October. Other fruits such as grapes, pears and plums are grown in this region and ready for harvest in September or beyond.



**Thank you to Denise and Nancy
from the London Master Gardeners
for sending us these
recommendations.**