

November in the Tallahassee Garden

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November continues to be a great time for planting, especially before the first frost which will likely come near the end of the month or in early December. This is the beginning of our dry time of year. Don't forget to water while the temperatures continue to be warm. New plantings will need extra attention.

Shrubs and Trees: Camellias are blooming now through early spring. To decide which cultivar(s) you might want to plant, visit Maclay Gardens or local nurseries. Camellias require well-drained soil and light shade, such as under high pine trees. Many types of ornamental trees and shrubs are affected by bacterial or fungal foliage and twig blights. Signs to look for are leaves and twigs which look progressively more damaged, looking brown and then dead. If you suspect a foliage blight, cut off the diseased portion, cutting all the way back to healthy wood. Clean up the leaves and twigs from the ground and destroy these along with the clippings. The only pruning that should be done now is the occasional unruly branch.



Flowers: Refrigerate hyacinths, tulips and crocuses for at least six weeks before planting. These are annuals in our area and have to be replanted each year. Also pre-chill daffodils. Some favorites for Tallahassee which should naturalize and multiply year after year include Carlton, Ice Follies and Fortune. Plant wildflower seeds and seeds of other spring blooming annuals such as poppies and sweet peas.

Lawn care: Leave your grass clippings and mower-chopped leaves on the lawn. This recycles some of the nutrients from any fertilizer that you applied earlier in the year. As you mow your lawn for the last few times this year, evaluate your grass. If the grass under trees and shrubs looks thin and weak, your lawn may be trying to tell you something. Where grass will not grow vigorously, try leaving the fallen leaves and pine straw for a tidy looking mulched bed or plant shade tolerant ground covers such as ivy, Asiatic jasmine or liriopse. If you want a green lawn which you can mow all winter, then over-seed your lawn with rye grass seed this month.

Vegetables: You can plant radishes and green onions now. Watch for cabbageworms on broccoli, collards, and cabbage. Control with a product containing Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). Aphids and mites on vegetables can be controlled with insecticidal soap sprayed on the tops and undersides of leaves.

Herbs: Try growing sage and lavender now. They prefer the milder, drier weather of fall and winter but need protection during our coldest periods. Parsley also grows well and makes a pretty addition to the flower or vegetable garden.

Ask a Master Gardener: Master Gardener volunteers answer gardening questions weekdays from 9-4:00 at the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Leon County, (850) 487-3004.

Q: Last year my Satsuma tree was loaded with fruit. This year there I have no fruit. What's wrong?

A: Your fruit tree has developed a bad habit, alternate-year bearing. You can accept this or try to break the habit by removing one-half of the fruit next year when they reach the size of walnuts. Eventually your tree should become well-behaved and fruit every year.

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Photo: CAMELLIA by David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Extension.

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