

November in the Tallahassee Garden



Now is the time to seed spring-blooming annuals such as these larkspur in front of the UF-IFAS Leon County Extension Center. *Photo by David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Leon County Extension.*

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Shrubs and Trees: This time of year is a great time to plant trees and shrubs. Don't forget the interest that plants with berries can add to the landscape. Pyracantha, hollies and beautyberry provide bright, winter interest. Keep new plants well watered. Check existing camellias, gardenias, and fruit trees for scale underneath the leaves or on the stems. If scale is present use a horticultural oil spray.

Annuals and Perennials: Plant wildflower seeds and seeds of other spring blooming annuals such as poppies, sweet alyssum, bachelor buttons, larkspur, and sweet peas. Sow into bare, prepared soil, and very lightly cover with soil. Keep the seedbed moist until germination. After the plants emerge and get a few leaves, routinely water the planting a couple of times per week whenever rainfall isn't received. Set out plants of pansies, snapdragons, petunias, dianthus, ornamental cabbage and kale now also. Pinching back annuals after planting will create bushier plants and encourage better root growth. Keep your annuals well mulched, fertilize with a light application of a slow-release fertilizer at planting and keep them well watered, especially prior to cold spells. Remove old flowers to encourage repeat bloom. Cut back chrysanthemums after they have finished blooming.

Bulbs, Corms and Tubers: Finish planting all spring flowering bulbs except hyacinths, tulips and crocuses. They can be planted now through December after having been refrigerated for at least six weeks. These are annuals in our area and have to be replanted each year. For most bulbs, corms and tubers select a well-drained soil which receives full sun for most of the day.

Vegetables and Herbs: Vegetable gardening can continue through the winter months. Plant onion and shallot transplants, spinach, endive, English peas, radishes, and green onions. Many greens also do great when started from seed at this time of the year. Lettuce and the more tender greens may need some protection during the colder parts of winter. Plant cold hardy herbs including parsley, sage rosemary and thyme.

Fruit: December through February are the recommended months to plant fruit trees. But start making plans now. because selection of the proper variety is very important. Consider planting

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blackberries, blueberries, figs, and pears if you are looking for low maintenance fruit. Citrus and muscadine grapes are considered medium maintenance fruit. They will do well in containers also. Apples, peaches, plums, and strawberries (which need to be planted in October and November) are considered higher maintenance fruit.

Lawn care: Our warm season lawn grasses are becoming dormant. Cool season weeds will probably not be that noticeable for another month or so. But, if you want to apply a pre-emergent herbicide for weed control, you need to do it now, before mid-November. During the winter try to mow your dormant lawn once a month to blow off leaves and mow down any weeds before they go to flower. Don't allow leaves to stay on the lawn. Use the mower to chop them and blow them into shaded spots under trees where the grass doesn't grow well anyway. You can also use them in the compost pile or collect them for mulching around shrubs.

Container Plants: Before bringing in container grown plants for the winter prepare to provide them with adequate light. Trim hedges and trees to allow more light to enter. Remove screens from windows that are not normally opened. Wash windows to remove dust and grime that cut down on the amount of light entering.

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