November in the Tallahassee Garden

Photo by David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Leon County Extension: Now is the time to plant cool-season annuals like petunias.

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Finally, it’s cool enough to actually enjoy gardening again! It sure seems like drudgery by the end of the summer.

Right Plant, Right Place
For cool-weather color that will last through spring, plant pansies, violas, petunias, snapdragons, dianthus, sweet alyssums, ornamental cabbages and nemesias this month. Spring seeds that may be sown this month are larkspur, bachelor buttons, Shirley and California poppies, and sweet peas. If you prefer perennials for fall color, consider firespike (Odontonema strictum), Mexican bush sage (Salvia leucantha), cigar flower (Cuphea micropetala) and pineapple sage (Salvia elegans). Plant American beautyberry, hollies and pyracantha for lasting color from their berries. Bulbs that can be planted now are crinums, daylilies, narcissus, snowflakes and amaryllis. Plant these annuals, perennials and bulbs in full sun for best results. For colorful fall foliage, plant crepe myrtles, dogwoods, red maples and shumard oak starting this month and throughout the winter.

Cooler-weather herbs include dill, fennel, parsley, sage and thyme. Cool-season vegetables like beets, broccoli cabbage, carrots, kale, lettuce and mustard can be planted this month. Plant strawberries now for spring fruit. Plant these herbs, vegetables and fruits in full sun.

Water
November is typically a dry month, so water newly planted selections frequently, as often as three times per week for the first several weeks. Mature lawns, shrubs and trees only need to be watered once per week when weather is dry. Beds where you have sown seed for spring should be kept moist until seeds germinate.
Fertilizer
Fertilize annuals, herbs and vegetables lightly every month using a slow release product. Do not fertilize grass, trees or shrubs until spring.

Mulch
Mulch is free this month! Gather fallen leaves by mowing with a bagger attachment; then empty into beds to a depth of three to four inches. Pull mulch several inches away from trunks and stems of trees and plants. Mulch will help to prevent evaporation of moisture from the soil, will keep roots warmer, add nutrients to the soil and discourage weeds.

Maintenance
Heavier chores, like installing new beds, will be much easier to accomplish this month with cooler temperatures. Planting large trees and shrubs can be done this month as well.

Wildlife
This is a great month for bird watching since many species are migrating now. Consider putting up a thistle seed feeder to attract goldfinches and buntings. Continue cleaning and refilling hummingbird feeders since some hummers winter here. Provide fresh water for birds and clean bird baths regularly. Locate bird feeders near shrubs and trees to provide cover from predators. This is a great month to take time out to sit in your garden and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

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