Horticulture Hints



Fall 2012

Landscape Gardening and Ornamentals

Fertilize Shrubs, Ground Covers by Late August at the Latest

You may fertilize your shrubs and ground covers that are still actively growing to encourage one last burst of growth, but do so by late August.

Fertilizer applications made later, especially with nitrogen, may keep plants actively growing into early winter, increasing the possibility of cold damage even to plants that normally would be hardy. This is especially true for us here in Louisiana, since fall temperatures generally are mild and do not give plants a strong signal to go dormant.

Shrubs and ground covers may be fertilized by sprinkling a granular fertilizer in the bed where they are growing. With shrubs, you also may apply the fertilizer around each plant. The size of the shrubs is a factor in determining the amount of fertilizer used. Rates generally are higher for larger shrubs, but check package recommendations for specific amounts.

With all those instructions, however, keep in mind you don't necessarily need to go out and fertilize now. If your shrubs and ground covers look healthy and have grown well this summer, there's little indication fertilizer is needed. If, on the other hand, you have been meaning to fertilize some plantings or feel other plantings would benefit from a fertilizer boost, now is the time to do it – not later.

Wide Selection of Cool-Season Bedding Plants Available

Nurseries and garden centers offer a wide selection of cool-season transplants and seeds. Transplants are well-established, blooming plants that provide color in your garden right away.

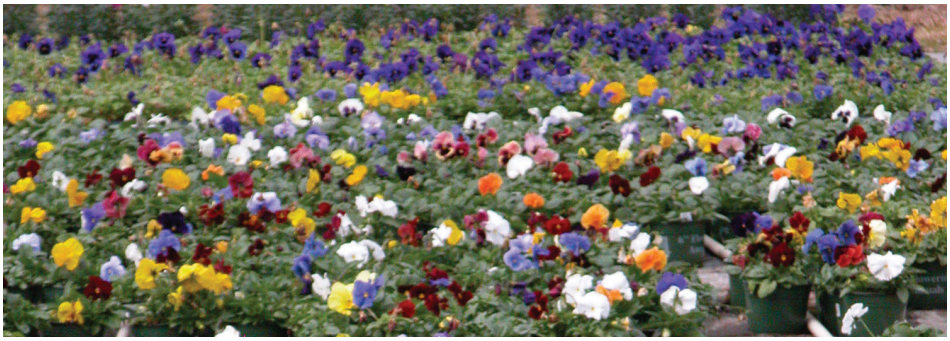
Some cool-season bedding plants, such as alyssum, Johnny-jump-up, bluebonnets, calendula, annual phlox and nasturtium, are easy to grow from seed and may be planted directly into beds. A few, including sweet peas, larkspur and the poppies (Shirley, Iceland, California and peony-flowered), resent transplanting and typically are seeded directly where they will grow.

Whether you use transplants or seed directly into place, planting should be done from mid-October through early December.

Before you plant either seeds or transplants, decide where you want to grow them and prepare the soil. Prepare beds well, because this makes a tremendous difference in the performance of the plants.

Cool-season bedding plants will bloom best in well-drained locations that receive six hours or more of sun. Generally, the more sun they receive, the more they will bloom and grow. Pansy, viola, forget-me-not, nicotiana, primrose, cyclamen and alyssum probably are the best choices for shadier areas, but even they will not perform well in heavy shade and do best where they get at least a few hours of morning sun. (Primrose and cyclamen will bloom with the least amount of sun.)

Plant heights also should be considered when selecting and placing bedding plants into the landscape. Low-growing flowers, which include sweet alyssum, lobelia*, pansy, Johnny-jump-up, viola, primrose*, cyclamen*, petunia* and dwarf stock, generally grow to about 4 to 8 inches and should be planted in the front of beds. Medium-height plants that will reach 8 to 15 inches include dwarf snapdragons, dwarf toadflax, candytuft, calendula, annual phlox, bluebonnet, dianthus, sweet William, ornamental kale and cabbage, nicotiana* and California poppy. Cool-season bedding plants that will grow 15 inches or taller include Iceland poppy, Shirley poppy, peony-flowered poppy, toadflax*, stock, snapdragons, statice, larkspur, delphinium, hollyhock and sweet peas. (The * indicates these plants may be more reliably hardy in south Louisiana.)



Louisiana Super Plants Tough, Beautiful

The Louisiana Super Plants program is an LSU AgCenter educational and marketing campaign that highlights tough and beautiful plants that perform well in Louisiana landscapes.

Louisiana Super Plants selections have a history of outstanding performance in Louisiana or have gone through several years of LSU AgCenter evaluations and observations. Louisiana Super Plants are "university tested and industry approved."

There are three parts to the Louisiana Super Plants program.

The first is identifying outstanding plants. The Louisiana Super Plants Selection Committee, composed of LSU AgCenter research and extension personnel, and the Louisiana Super Plants Advisory Committee, composed of green industry professionals, make selections for spring and fall release each year.

The second is getting the word out to Louisiana gardeners. Information is available to the public through a wide variety of media. Look for information on Louisiana Super Plants in newsletters, magazines, newspapers, TV segments and on the radio. In addition, signs showing the logo, pictures of the plants and growing information are placed in participating nurseries and garden centers to help shoppers find and choose Louisiana Super Plants.

That brings us to the third part. It will not help you to be told about really great plants if you cannot find them at your local nurseries. To ensure Louisiana Super Plants selections are available at retail nurseries and garden centers, the Louisiana Super Plants program works closely with wholesale growers in Louisiana to ensure they produce plenty of the selected plants. At the same time, retail plant sellers are kept informed of the selections and are encouraged to carry them.

Louisiana Super Plants for Fall 2012

Sorbet Series Viola



Sorbet violas are the best flowering violas in LSU AgCenter trials. The vigorous plants produce small, bright flowers that cover the plant from late fall through spring. Flowering is so prolific it can obscure the foliage, and the smaller flowers hold up to rainy winter weather much better than pansies. Sorbet violas are more uniform and compact than other types of violas. They are completely winter hardy in Louisiana and come in a multitude of bright colors. They are an outstanding choice for beds or containers.

'Conversation Piece' Azalea



The Conversation Piece azalea belongs to the Robin Hill group. This group of azaleas is known for multiseasonal blooming and large flowers on hardy plants. Flower size on Conversation Piece can be nearly 4 inches across. A unique feature of Conversation Piece is that flowers of different colors appear on the same plant. Flower colors range from dark pink to nearly white to variegated pink and white with darker pink center blotches on the same plant. Flowering occurs in fall and again in spring. Plants grow 3 feet to 5 feet tall by 3 feet to 5 feet wide. Use this low-growing, mounding evergreen shrub as a color accent or in a foundation planting in partly shaded areas.

Evergreen Sweet Bay Magnolia



Louisiana gardeners are always looking for nice trees for the landscape. The sweet bay magnolia (Magnolia virginiana) is an excellent native tree that is not nearly as well known as it should be. The variety chosen as a Louisiana Super Plant selection is the evergreen type, Magnolia virginiana var. australis, which retains its leaves through the winter. Speaking of the leaves, the foliage of the sweet bay magnolia is especially beautiful. Smaller and lighter green than the Southern magnolia and without the glossy shine, the foliage of the sweet bay is bright silver on the reverse. When the wind catches the canopy and flips up the leaves, the ripples of silver are a delight to the eye. Flowers are creamy white and about 2-3 inches in diameter. They are present in April and May and have a lemony fragrance. Mature trees will average about 30 feet tall with a spread of 20 feet, but larger sizes are common. Trees commonly are grown with a single trunk and will produce an attractive columnar, upright tree, but they can also be grown multitrunked.

Replenish Mulches

Mulches may have decayed and thinned out over the summer. Replenish mulch layers with fresh material to maintain about a 2- to 3-inch thickness.

Simply spread the new mulch over the old mulch. Ideally, use what you can get for free – such as leaves, dry grass clippings or pine straw. If you prefer the appearance of a commercial mulch, put down 1-2 inches of leaves, dry grass clippings or pine straw and then topdress with 1 inch of your favorite purchased mulch. This will save you money and still give you the look you like.

Tips for Pruning Knock Out Roses

Knock Out roses have become amazingly popular over the past few years. These roses have singlehandedly changed the market for roses since their introduction and ushered in a whole new way to look at roses and use of them in our landscapes.

The Knock Out's outstanding characteristics are well documented – excellent disease resistance, more frequent reblooming, colorful cherry red flowers in showy clusters, attractive dark green foliage and a shrubby growth habit that works well with other landscape plants.

One issue, however, is size. Many people purchase this plant with a tag that states the mature size at about 4 feet tall and wide. In fact, however, they easily can grow 6 feet by 6 feet or more.

The good news is that pruning them is not difficult, and when done about twice a year, pruning can keep your bushes around 4 feet tall and wide.

The first pruning is done from late January through mid-February. Cut the bushes back about one-third to one-half their height. (Do not cut back any lower than 24 inches from the ground.) Cutting back these roses does stimulate vigorous new growth and may improve flowering. To control size during summer, cut back about 6 to 8 inches when you prune off the faded flower clusters. Another opportunity to cut the bushes back arrives in late August or early September. Again, you don't have to be too fussy about this. Generally, cut bushes back about one-third.

Choosing Right Plants for Your Landscape Key to Success

Gardeners often are advised that the key to gardening success is planting the right plant in the right place. Although this sounds relatively simple, a lot goes into the decision of what plants should be used and where they should be planted in the landscape.

In particular, a gardener must focus on what characteristics the selected plants need to have to (1) satisfy the needs and taste of the gardener and (2) allow the plants to thrive in the growing conditions provided. Most gardeners are not walking around with a plant encyclopedia in their heads, however, so it is virtually impossible for the average person to look at a given situation and rattle off a selection of appropriate plants. Yet when planning a landscape project, gardeners often try to come up with names of the specific plants they will use right at the beginning of the planning process.

Rather than immediately trying to think of a specific plant or asking someone for a specific suggestion, you must think carefully of the characteristics the plant needs to have – size, growth habit, preferred growing conditions, etc. After that, you can check references or consult with professionals, and they can help you find the plants that most closely match those characteristics.

In selecting a shade tree, for example, do not go into the nursery and simply say you are looking for a good shade tree. Instead, take a detailed list of the characteristics the tree should have and then consult an appropriate reference, go to the nursery or contact a horticulturist at your parish LSU AgCenter Extension Service office for help in selecting the tree that best fits your description. You (and the professional you ask) will find this so much easier, and the recommendations you get from professionals will more clearly reflect what you need and desire. Instead of having to make your decision looking at all the different trees available, your choice is made from the two or three trees that specifically fit your needs and the growing conditions. Sometimes, when the dust settles, there is only one tree that best measures up to the list, and the decision is made.

So instead of asking for a good shade tree recommendation, it is much more meaningful to say, "I'm looking for a good shade tree that grows about 40 feet tall, is deciduous and fast growing, tolerates less than ideal drainage, is well adapted to our area and, ideally, produces attractive flowers or fruit. A horticulturist then might recommend a female native Drummond red maple (Acer rubrum var. drummondii) because it would fit that description of desired characteristics.

Although proper tree selection is especially important, this decision-making process should be used when deciding about any types of plants to use in your landscape. When selecting shrubs, ground covers, annuals, perennials or lawns, you will find this process is a very useful tool that will help you avoid mistakes that are almost always difficult to correct.

With careful consideration of the needed characteristics, you are less likely to choose the wrong plant, plant it in the wrong spot and regret the results.



Checklist for September, October, November

1. Begin preparing beds for fall planting.
2. Take soil samples from landscape beds and submit to your parish LSU AgCenter Extension Service office for analysis. The cost is $10 per sample.
3. Fall is a great time to plant trees. If room is available in your landscape, plant a few native trees. Trees that provide good fall color in Louisiana include baldcypress, Nuttall oak, Shumard oak, cherry bark oak, flowering pear, Chinese pistachio, ginkgo, Japanese maple, sweet gum, sumac and hickory.
4. Plant spring-flowering bulbs in your gardens from late October through early December. Exceptions are tulips and hyacinths, which must be refrigerated and planted in late December or early January.
5. Garden mums make a great addition for fall color. Check at your local retail garden center for availability.
6. Watch azalea plantings for early fall infestations of lace bugs. Control with acephate, horticultural oil sprays, pyrethroids (bifenthrin, cyfluthrin or permethrin) and other recommended insecticides.
7. Build a compost pile out of leaves, grass clippings and remains from your vegetable garden.
8. Divide Louisiana irises in September.
9. Many of the summer-blooming perennials are finished or are completing their floral display for the year. Cut back the flower stalks and old faded flowers to keep the plants looking attractive.
10. October weather can be dry, so water landscape plantings as needed. Pay special attention to any newly planted areas. It generally is best to water direct-seeded beds of flowers or vegetables lightly every day to make sure the seeds do not dry out.
11. Prune everblooming roses by early September.
12. Fall is an excellent time to plant many herbs in the garden. A few herb plants provide a lot of harvest, so don't plant more than you can use. Herbs to plant now include parsley, sage, thyme, dill, cilantro, rosemary, oregano, borage, fennel, nasturtium, French tarragon, chives, mint and catnip.

Dan Gill
Consumer Horticulturist

Fall Lawns

Should You Fertilize Lawn During Fall?

Louisiana usually stays warm well into the fall, and lawns continue to grow until nighttime temperatures dip into the 50s. So be sure to mow and water your lawn as needed to keep it healthy.

More than likely, however, it is time to put up your fertilizer spreader. Fertilizing warm-season grasses during the fall with high nitrogen (summer-type) fertilizers or winterizing fertilizers containing nitrogen are not recommended for Deep South lawns.

Stimulating fall growth of St. Augustine grass, centipede grass, and zoysia with nitrogen leads to increased brown patch disease and winter kill. Bermuda grass may be fertilized into September, but I would not make any more applications of nitrogen-containing fertilizers after August for St. Augustine, centipede and zoysia.

If you need extra color in home lawns this fall, apply foliar iron spray or spreadable iron granules. This will give you a nice flush of green growth without causing increased occurrences of diseases.

The only other fertilizer that could be applied in the fall is muriate of potash. Muriate of potash (0-0-60) is the true winterizing fertilizer and it may be applied in September or October to provide increased disease resistance and cold tolerance. Most garden centers and feed stores have this form of potash. Get a soil test before applying potash to your soil, however, since there is no advantage to applying excessive amounts.

Speaking of Soil Tests…

Fall is the best time of the year to get your soil tested by the LSU AgCenter.

Soil testing really is the first step to a beautiful lawn next spring and is the best way to determine exactly what your lawn needs to become thick and healthy. If you haven't tested your soil in the past several years, do it now.

To test your soil, submit a pint of soil to the LSU AgCenter Extension Service office in your parish. The pint should be a composite of soil samples collected from several different areas in the lawn. You will only need to go about 4 inches deep. Also, to simplify the soil sampling and submission process, there are new pre-addressed submission boxes with sampling instructions at several garden centers throughout the state.

The sample results will be sent to your home mailbox and/or email in about two weeks. An LSU AgCenter extension agent can help you interpret the results from the soil sample. Sample results may indicate that lime is needed to increase soil pH. If so, fall/winter is a good time to apply lime, since it takes several months to activate in the soil.

Weed management

Granular pre-emergence herbicides can help manage winter weeds when applied prior to weed germination. These are the same herbicides used for pre-emergence crabgrass control in late winter and early spring.

Pre-emergence herbicides containing pendimethalin (Scotts Halts), dithiopyr, (Hi-Yield Weed Stopper) and benefin plus trifluralin (Green Light Crabgrass Preventer) provide good control of annual bluegrass, common chickweed and various other winter annuals prior to their emergence. Isoxaben (Green Light Portrait) provides good control of winter annual broadleaves. Isoxaben has no activity on germinating grasses, however, so consider applying one of the previously mentioned herbicides on the same lawn for a complete broad-spectrum,

pre-emergence weed control program.

Pre-emergence herbicides should be applied mid- to late September and reapplied by mid-November. Water the herbicides into the lawn or apply just prior to rainfall. Make sure you use pre-emergence herbicides that do not contain nitrogen fertilizer because of potential for increased occurrence of brown patch disease.

Atrazine may be applied to St. Augustine, centipede and zoysia grasses for broad-spectrum winter weed control from late October through December. It can kill emerged winter broadleaves and grasses and is very effective on annual bluegrass, clover and lawn burweed (sticker weed).

Fall is Brown Patch Disease Season

Brown patch disease starts to appear in lawns as nighttime temperatures cool down below 70 F.

This fungal disease is very common in St. Augustine, centipede and zoysia grasses. The disease appears as circular browned-out areas in various locations of the lawn. Unfortunately, brown patch disease can come and go all winter if weather is mild and lawns don't go dormant.

Treating lawns with fungicides labeled for brown patch will minimize the damage caused by the disease. Usually two to three preventive applications work best when applied a couple of weeks apart starting in mid- to late September. Look for fungicides containing active ingredients such as azoxystrobin, propiconazole, thiophanate, triadimefon or myclobutanil.

Ron Strahan
Weed Scientist/Turfgrass Specialist



Brown patch on centipede grass.

Fruits

Fruit Crop Chilling Requirements

The chilling requirement is the minimum period of cold weather after which a fruit-bearing plant will blossom normally. Some bulbs also have chilling requirements to bloom, and some seeds have chilling requirements to germinate.

The chilling requirement often is expressed in chill hours, which can be calculated in different ways, all of which essentially involve adding up the total amount of time spent at certain temperatures during a winter season. Put another way, a chilling unit is the measure of a plant's exposure to chilling temperatures.

The amount of chilling needed to satisfy a tree's dormant rest requirement, plus the amount of heat required to initiate growth, determines how long buds will remain dormant. In general, the lower the chilling requirement, the earlier a tree will bloom.

Most fruit-producing plants in Louisiana develop next year's buds during the summer. In the autumn, the buds go dormant, and the dormancy "switch" is triggered by shortening day lengths and a certain minimum exposure to chilling temperatures. Lack of exposure to sufficient cold temperatures during the dormancy period can result in delayed and substandard foliation, flowering and fruiting.

Fruit Crop Selection Needs To Match Local Weather Conditions

Apples, for example, have high chilling requirements, but citrus has no chilling requirement.

Apple varieties have a diverse range of permissible minimum chilling, but most have been bred for cooler climates. There are some, however, like 'Ozark Gold,' 'Golden Delicious,' 'Gala' and 'Fuji' varieties, that can be grown in north Louisiana areas receiving 750 hours. In addition, 'Anna,' 'Dorsett Golden,' and 'Ein Shemer' can produce in coastal areas that may only receive 300 chilling hours.

Peach varieties range in their requirements from 100 chilling units ('FlordaGrande' variety, zoned for low-chill regions) to 1,000 units ('Surecrop,' zoned for high-chill regions). Planting a low-chilling variety in a high-chill region risks loss of a year's harvest when an early bloom is hit by a spring frost. A high-chilling variety planted in a low-chill region may never fruit at all.

A four-year study of 'Ruston Red' peach, which has a threshold of 850 chilling units, demonstrated that a seasonal chilling deficiency of less than 50 units has no effect on harvest. Deficiency of 50 to 100 units may result in loss of up to 50 percent of expected harvest. Deficiency of 250 hours or more is a sure loss of practically the whole harvest, and the few fruit produced will be of very poor quality and have no market value.

Chilling of orange trees has two effects. First, it increases production of orange color and decreases chlorophyll content of the fruit, improving its appearance and ultimately its market value. Second, the "quasi-dormancy" experienced by orange trees triggers concentrated flowering in spring, as opposed to more or less uniform round-the-year flowering and fruiting in warmer climates.

When considering fruit trees, there are several climate guidelines to follow for maximum crop yield:

- Select varieties that have a chilling requirement at least 20 percent less than local averages.
- Selecting a low-chill variety in a cold area will result in trees flowering too early and being damaged by late frosts.
- Selecting a high-chill variety in warm areas will result in little or no fruit production.

- Early flowering varieties generally are best in warm climates, and late flowering varieties are best in cooler areas.
- Early ripening varieties are best in areas with intense summers, and late ripening varieties are best in cooler summers.
- Climate extremes may eliminate certain varieties that would otherwise meet the chilling requirements. For example, late ripening varieties have a much longer exposure to insects and diseases. Heat and drought also may stress a fruit tree beyond its ability to produce quality fruit.
- Terrain can affect the chilling hours received. Open slopes may receive more chilling hours than sheltered areas next to warm buildings.
- Various sellers of fruit trees publish significantly varying chilling hour requirements for the same variety. It is difficult to know the exact requirements. Experiment and ask around for promising locally successful varieties.

Below are the chilling requirement ranges for some common Louisiana fruit crops:

- Blackberries: 200-700 hours
- Rabbiteye Blueberries: 200-600 hours
- Muscadine Grapes: 200-500 hours
- Figs: 200-500 hours
- Peaches: 250-850 hours
- Pears: 250-450 hours
- Oriental Persimmons: 200-500 hours
- Plums: 250-850 hours
- Apples: 250-1,000 hours

David Himelrick, PhD
Horticulturist

Vegetable Gardening

Vegetables to Plant

September...

Beets, broccoli (transplants or seeds through September), Brussels sprouts (transplants or seeds), cabbage (transplants or seeds), Chinese cabbage (transplants or seeds), cauliflower (transplants or seeds), collards (transplants or seeds), endive, carrots, English peas, snow peas, garlic (late September), kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onions (seeds, late September), parsley, snap beans (early September), radishes, rutabaga, shallots, spinach, Swiss chard, turnips and kale.

October...

Cabbage, broccoli (transplants), mustard,* turnips, collards, kale, parsley, shallots, radishes, beets, spinach,* leaf lettuce, Chinese cabbage,* celery, onions, Swiss chard, garlic, carrots and endive.*

November...

Beets,* shallots, garlic,* Swiss chard, spinach, kale, radishes, mustard, carrots and turnips.

*Plant during the first part of the month.



Wow, it's hot outside… But can you believe it's already time to start thinking about your fall garden!

Make sure you prepare your soil by removing all existing weeds and adding compost or fertilizer (according to soil test recommendations). It's also a good idea to check for leaks in your current irrigation system so you aren't running frantically to the hardware store after you've planted your seeds and seedlings!

All garden preparations should be completed by the end of August, so you can start planting in September.

Crop Highlights

Beets. Plant beets from the fall through the winter. Choose Ruby Queen, Scarlet Supreme, Chariot or Solo.

Broccoli and Cauliflower. Direct-seed or transplant during September. Space cauliflower about 12 to 18 inches apart and broccoli 9 to 12 inches apart. Both shallow-rooted crops respond to fairly high rates of fertilizer, 4 to 6 pounds of 8-8-8 or 3 to 4 pounds of 8-24-24 per 100 feet of row. Side-dress with about a pint of ammonium nitrate per 100 feet of row about two to four weeks after transplanting. Side-dress again at two-week intervals two to three more times. This will increase yield.

Recommended broccoli varieties include Packman, Windsor, Diplomat, Patron and Gypsy. Recommended early cauliflower hybrids are Snow Crown (All-America Selections), Majestic, Freedom, Cumberland, Candid Charm and White Rock.

Cabbage. Recommended varieties for fall and winter production are Bravo, Rio Verde, Silver Dynasty, Thunderhead, Emblem, Blue Vantage, Cheers and Vantage Point.

Carrots. Start directly seeding carrots during September and continue to plant throughout the fall season. Form high, well-drained rows. Thin seedlings to about 2 inches apart. Choose Danvers 126, Thumbelina and Purple Haze (All-America Selections). For sandy soils, use Apache, Choctaw, Big Sur, Maverick or Navaho.

Chinese Cabbage. Chinese cabbage is an excellent crop for fall gardens. Seeds are planted in September. Solid heads form 55 to 60 days after seeding.

English Peas and Snow Peas. Plant English peas, snow peas and other peas with edible pods during September. The key to success is to plant early enough so they bloom before frost and late enough so they aren't blooming when temperatures are too high. Space peas 1 to 2 inches apart. About 2 to 4 ounces of seeds will plant a 100-foot row. Between 70 and 80 days are required from planting

until harvest. Staking or trellising peas, even the bush types, will help to increase the chances of success.

Garlic. Separate garlic bulbs into individual cloves prior to planting during October. Tahiti and elephant garlic are the largest and mildest of the recommended garlic varieties. The Italian and Creole varieties are smaller and stronger.

Check the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Market Bulletin's website (http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/portal/News/MarketBulletinCurrent/tabid/165/Default.aspx) for possible sources of sets.

Plant cloves about 1 inch deep and 4 to 6 inches apart in the row. Several drills may be planted on one row. Allow 6 to 8 inches between drills. Fertilize before planting with 4 to 5 pounds of 8-24-24 per 100 feet of row. Side-dress with nitrogen after garlic is up and again in February and March just before the bulbs swell.

Green Shallots. Shallot sets can be planted any time in the fall or winter. Replant bulbs as you harvest by separating plants and transplanting some of them again. By doing this, you can have shallots through spring. The largest shallot bulbs for sets are made by transplanting from mid-November to December.

Greens. Keep the soil moist. Avoid thick plantings of greens. A 3- to 4-inch spacing between plants is recommended. For weed control, Treflan can be incorporated before planting. Double drills may be planted on one row, allowing 10 to 12 inches between drills.

For good collards, plant Blue Max, Champion, Top Bunch or Top Pick.

Lettuce. September is the best month to plant lettuce. Head and semi-head lettuce should be planted so it is harvested before a hard frost. Side-dress three to four weeks after transplanting and repeat side-dressing two to three weeks later.

Recommended lettuce varieties include:

- Semi-head: Green Forest, Green Towers, Buttercrunch (All-America Selections), Oak Leaf or Parris.
- Leaf: Simpson Elite, Red Fire, Red Salad Bowl, Nevada or Sierra.
- Head: Great Lakes, Ithaca or Maverick.

Lightly cover lettuce seeds for best germination. For endive or escarole, choose Ruffle, Salad King or Full Heart.

Onions (Bulbing). Onion seeds may be planted for transplants from mid-September until mid-October. Keep the soil moist, because seed coats are hard. It may take two weeks for onion seeds to germinate to a stand. Onions can be transplanted into the garden from mid-December through January. You also may sow directly in the row where they will mature in October.

Short-day varieties to plant:

- Red: Red Creole C5 or Red Burgundy.
- White: Super Star Hybrid (All-America Selections), Candy (golden) or Georgia Boy.



- Yellow: Granex 33, Texas Grano 1015Y, Nirvana, Savannah Sweet or Sweet Melody.

Fertilize plants sparingly prior to planting in the ground. This will prevent excessive growth, premature seed stalk development and bolting. About 2 to 3 pounds of 0-20-20, 7-21-21 or 8-24-24 per 100 feet of row are sufficient. Side-dress onions during the spring just before they bulb. Side-dress two additional times at two- to three-week intervals. (Follow the same schedule for bulbing shallots.)

Pumpkins and Winter Squash. Harvest pumpkins and winter squash after they have developed a hard rind and the appropriate color for their varieties. If the rind cannot be easily penetrated by the thumbnail, the fruit is mature. Leave about 3 inches of stem attached to the fruit. If stored in a cool, dry place (off the ground and floor, if possible), these cucurbits will keep well for several months.

Spinach. Spinach requires a fertile, well-drained soil with a pH of 6 to 7.

Apply 4 to 5 pounds of a complete fertilizer per 100 feet of row about two weeks before planting. Side-dress spinach with 1 pound of ammonium nitrate per 100 feet of row. Start side-dressing about one month after seeding. This will keep it growing quickly, making it tender and improving quality. An additional side-dressing after harvest will improve yields on second cuttings.

Plant seeds about a half-inch deep and thin plants to 1 to 3 inches apart in the row. Since seeds are slow to germinate, be sure to keep soil moist. Double drills may be planted on one row. Allow 8 to 12 inches between drills.

Suggested varieties are Melody, Smooth-Ballet and Tiger Cat.

Kathryn Fontenot, Ph.D.
Extension Vegetable Specialist

LouEASYana GARDENING

Pallet Gardens Easy Alternative

Pallet gardens are an easy alternative to large gardens for growing smaller sized vegetables, herbs and ornamental flowers. Gardeners with limited budgets and limited yard space can benefit from growing pallet gardens for several reasons.

Pallets are cheap alternatives to building raised beds – especially if you can find a pallet for free. Check with local restaurants, gas stations and grocers. The entire pallet garden requires almost no space!

Garden blogs and garden websites touting pallet gardens as trendy. But do they work? We decided to build a pallet garden and found that by making a few minor modifications to online plans, pallets really do make nice garden "beds" for smaller vegetables and herbs.



Helpful Hint!

Construct the pallet garden in the permanent growing location. Once filled with wet soil and plants, pallet gardens are very heavy!

Here are some LSU AgCenter directions to construct and plant a pallet garden:

Materials Needed:

1 pallet, a staple gun and staples, landscape fabric, soil and seedlings.

- **Step 1.** Find a pallet. Don't spend money on a new one. Visit a local dumpster or speak with a grocery store manager. Pallets often can be found behind large stores, but first ask a manager before you take one, since delivery services sometimes recycle pallets, which saves money for the stores.
- **Step 2.** If any of the pallet boards are loose, nail them securely. If old nails are sticking out, remove them.
- **Step 3.** If the boards are really rough, lightly sand to prevent splinters.
- **Step 4.** Determine which side you want to be the front, then flip the pallet over. Starting on one side of the pallet, staple the landscape fabric (double-layered) to the sides of the pallet, working from one side across the back and onto the other side. You also may want to start stapling at the top of the pallet, pulling the fabric taut as you move across and down. Make sure the bottom of the pallet also is covered by a double layer of landscape fabric.
- **Step 5.** Lay the pallet on the ground with the front side up.
- **Step 6.** Fill the pallet with soil. Occasionally tip the pallet to a 45-degree angle and shake soil to the bottom. Be careful not to let too much fall out of the front slots.
- **Step 7.** Arrange plants in all slots between wood, placing the plants tightly together.
- **Step 8.** Fill the remaining empty spaces with soil.
- **Step 9.** Place something like bricks or concrete pavers under the top portion of the pallet garden. (We used a low bench.) Staple a single layer of landscape fabric to the top of the pallet. Cut small holes in the top to plant seedlings that will grow vertically in the pallet. Stapling landscape fabric to the top side of the pallet at this stage allows you to fill the pallet completely with soil. It also keeps the soil from falling out of the pallet each time you water and prevents weeds from growing around the plants in the top section of the pallet garden. Leave pallet in this position for approximately two to three weeks.
- **Step 10.** Carefully and slowly water the pallet. If you water too quickly, the soil will rush out of the top of the pallet.
- **Step 11.** After two to three weeks, the roots will prevent soil from falling out of the pallet garden when you flip it vertically. Flip the pallet to a standing position. Regularly water and use a liquid fertilizer.

Rural Life Museum & Burden Center

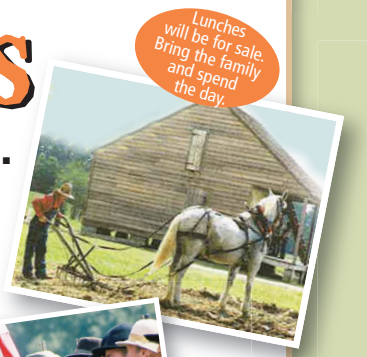
Join us

for fun, family events in September and October

Rural Life Museum
HARVEST DAYS

September 22-23 . 8:30 a.m. -5 p.m.

- Featuring traditional agricultural activities
- Wagon rides
- Hands-on activities for children
- Living history demonstrations of harvesting, hunting and home life activities by costumed artisans
- Gift shop with handcrafted objects by Louisiana artisans
- Traditional Louisiana music
- Extra activities
- Regular admission charged





Battle of Baton Rouge Reenactment
Saturday - 2 p.m. & Sunday-1 p.m.

Corn Maze
at Burden Center



September 22-23 . 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Burden Horticulture Society and LSU AgCenter invite you to find your way out of the corn maze, paint a pumpkin, enjoy a hayride, climb the straw mountain and more.
Admission - $3 for Corn Maze.



Corn Maze Saturdays . 4-7 p.m.

Walk through the corn maze. Saturday, September 29, October 6, 13 and 20. **Admission-$5.**

Halloween Bonfire and Corn Maze
Saturday, October 27, 4-9 p.m.
Includes corn maze, bonfire, hotdogs and music.
Admission - $10

Burden Horticulture Society

LSU AgCenter Research & Extension

LSU

4560 Essen Lane
Baton Rouge

LSUAgCenter.com/BurdenCenter
225-763-3990

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Horticulture Hints



Fall 2012

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Parish agents, please adapt these suggestions to your area before disseminating.

The LSU Agricultural Center is a statewide campus of the LSU System and provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.