



Coming Events

- Thurs., Oct. 10th, 10:00a
Demonstration -Planting Trees and Shrubs
- Thurs., Oct. 24th, 10:00a
Demonstration—Planting Fall Bulbs
- Thurs., Oct. 31st
Deadline to order from 4-H Fruit Plant Sale

A Time to Plant



You can register online for any of the Think Green Thursdays classes here: <https://goo.gl/yQzUtp> . Just click on the name of the class you want.

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After this brutal summer, it's easy to see why it's preferable to plant so many things in the fall of the year.



Let's begin with lawns. Cool-season lawn grasses (fescue) planted in fall will get two seasons of root growth before the wrath of summer heat arrives next year to beat it down. In most years, seeding and overseeding should happen in mid September, but this year's extended heat and drought might delay that until this month, and that would still be better than spring planting. If you've already planted and your first try has had limited success, try, try again. It's not too late!

Dig In!

Herbaceous perennials (those that die to the ground in winter but come back in spring) also do better when planted in the fall. Tops may be dormant, but as long as soil temperatures hover above freezing, there will be root growth, and that means lots of time to get established and better prepared for summer.



Woody plants (trees and shrubs): After leaf fall, root growth continues and, again, these plants will have an extra season to become established in your landscape. Come to our tree planting demonstration at the next Think Green Thursday to see how to properly plant a tree. Check out page one for registration information for the October 10th class.



Wait until soil temperatures dip below 60 degrees to plant spring blooming bulbs, if you can. This will encourage root growth and discourage premature top growth. There are so many choices to brighten up your spring. Get some ideas at the Think Green Thursday workshop Thursday, October 24th at 10:00AM.



Another reason fall planting is better: As the weather cools, transpiration slows or nearly stops. Transpiration is the loss of water through the leaves' pores, or *stomata*, a function of photosynthesis. Water is still necessary for plant functions such as growing roots, so you will still have to remember to water new plantings if there is a prolonged dry spell, even in winter.



Fall is for planting, even in the vegetable garden! You can still put out sturdy greens like kale and collard plants now. Plant garlic toward the end of the month by placing individual cloves about six inches apart and two inches deep (to the bottom of the clove—pointy side up!) If you want to use grocery store garlic, buy organic bulbs unless you see the conventionally grown bulbs have begun to sprout. Some conventionally grown garlic may have been treated with a chemical to prevent sprouting.

For all your home gardening answers, contact me, Mark, or the Extension Master Gardeners

NC STATE

Extension Master Gardener



October Garden Tips

Expect the first frost around the middle of October. Before that night, bring in houseplants that have summered outdoors. Inspect them for uninvited guests, such as insects or snakes, and place the plants in a bright spot for the winter. Also on your “to do” list before frost: Harvest sweet potatoes, gourds and winter squash. Pick green tomatoes and wrap them individually in newspaper to ripen at room temperature.

Think spring when in the vegetable garden this month. This is a great time to till in compost and lime and any other nutrients and get it working over the winter. You’ll be ready to plant those sugar snap peas when February 2020 rolls around.

Cold-loving annuals can be planted from seed now. Sweet peas, poppies, Bells of Ireland, forget-me-nots and larkspur are just a few that can’t take the heat but shine when there’s a chill in the air. Keep in mind that pre-emergence herbicides will also prevent seeds of desired plants from germinating.

Take cuttings from woody herbs, dip in rooting hormone and plant in moist, well-drained medium. Lemon balm, oregano, sage, rosemary, tarragon and thyme are all good candidates for your windowsill garden.

Dig, divide and re-plant spring and summer-blooming perennials now. Daylilies and hosta will benefit from this attention and October is the best month to divide peonies, but hellebores (Lenten rose) resent division. Luckily, these plants readily reseed themselves, so look for seedlings to transplant.

October is the right time to plant new trees and shrubs. Dig the planting hole at least twice as wide, but no deeper than the root ball of the plant. Loosen a tight root ball and plant just a little high to allow for settling. Check for good drainage and water plants thoroughly as you backfill. To see how it’s done, attend our Think Green Thursday demonstration on October 10th.

Begin planting spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, crocus and hyacinths as soon as soil temperatures drop below 60 degrees. Attend our Think Green Thursday Bulb Planting demonstration for some pointers on October 24th.

For a great lawn without excessive mowing, feed established cool-season lawns just three times – September, November and February (Loosely and easier to remember—Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Valentine’s Day.) Apply 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn area at each feeding.

A soil test will help you determine whether you need other nutrients besides nitrogen (the NCDA Soils Lab doesn’t test for nitrogen, as this nutrient is water soluble and is presumed to be zero by the time you fertilize). Phosphorus and potassium are far less soluble. The soil test will help you decide which kind and how much fertilizer to apply and the test is still free this month!

Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



Dwarf Tatarian aster

Aster tataricus 'Jindai'

You're going to want this stately aster in your perennial border. Small lavender flowers with showy yellow centers in large trusses atop tall sturdy stems announce to the pollinators that autumn has arrived!

Growing up four to six feet, it's surprising how self-supporting those tall stems are. And, as the longest-blooming aster, you can expect a pollinator party from late summer until hard frost.

All you need to provide is a patch of reasonable soil in full sun to part shade and an average amount of water for dwarf Tatarian aster 'Jindai' to quickly form a nice patch as wide as it is tall. Large coarse leaves add a nice textural element to the border even before the flowers put on their show.

Easily propagated by division in spring, aster Jindai is about as trouble-free as a perennial can be. Neither deer nor rabbits will bother it, but bees and butterflies can't get enough of it!

