

Coming Events

Friday, November 18

Deadline to order from the 4-H Wreath Sale!

More info here: [4-H WREATH SALE](#)



We're working on our slate of classes for Think Green Thursdays in 2023. Classes will begin

in February. Let us know if there's a topic you would like to see covered. We'll work on it!

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Wrapping Things Up—A Checklist

Soil Test

- ◇ The NCDA Soils Lab offers free soil testing service from April 1 until Thanksgiving. Contact us for more information.
- ◇ Fall is an excellent time to apply lime (if recommended by your soil test) and you can add phosphorus and potassium if the soil test determines that these nutrients are deficient.
- ◇ Nitrogen fertilization is not recommended for any plants at this time.



Leave the Leaves!

- ◇ Let them be! They are nature's own mulch.
- ◇ Remove from lawn areas.
- ◇ A rake works well on established lawns.
- ◇ Consider a low-powered blower for newly-seeded areas.
- ◇ Spread them on fallow vegetable beds and natural areas.
- ◇ Use them as the "brown" in your compost pile.
- ◇ Grind them up for faster breakdown.



Vegetables

- ◇ Plant garlic and onion bulbs.
- ◇ Put packets of unused seed inside screw-top glass jars. Add a small tissue packet of powdered milk to the jar to serve as a desiccant, soaking up moisture from the air inside the jar that would otherwise get into the seeds and reduce their longevity. Store the jar in the refrigerator.
- ◇ Grow leafy vegetables such as lettuce and spinach in a cold frame or beneath a row cover for harvesting all winter long.
- ◇ Plant a cover crop in unused garden spaces.



Cover crops

- ◇ Improve soil texture
- ◇ Fix Nitrogen
- ◇ Reduce soil compaction
- ◇ Recapture nutrients
- ◇ Control weeds
- ◇ Prevent erosion

Hunker down and think spring!

Perennials

- ◇ Remove dead foliage, but leave seed pods for wildlife.
- ◇ Do not cut back hollow-stemmed perennials, including lantana and salvias. Wait until winter's end for these (March).
- ◇ Divide and transplant now.
- ◇ Plant divisions and new plants the same depth as they were growing.



Bulbs

- ◇ Dig up and store tender bulbs such as dahlias, caladiums and elephant ears. Store in a cool, dry place until spring.
- ◇ You can leave the dahlias and elephant ears in the ground until spring, *if* you're willing to take a chance.
- ◇ Plant tulips, hyacinths, and jonquils 6 inches apart and 6 inches deep (to the bottom of the bulb). Crocus, anemones, and grape hyacinths should be planted 2 inches apart and 4-5 inches deep. Remember to plant bulbs with the pointy side up! If deer are a problem, stick to members of the narcissus family—jonquils and daffodils.
- ◇ Protect tulip and other vulnerable bulbs by planting them in hardware cloth cages or berry boxes.
- ◇ Or, try interplanting tulips and hyacinths with daffodils.



Shrubs and trees

- ◇ Pruning: **DON'T**. Unless it's to remove dead or broken branches.
- ◇ Planting: **DO!** This is the best time to install new trees and shrubs. The cooler air temperatures mean less stress on the plant and there's plenty of time to establish roots before summer heat sets in.
- ◇ Dig planting holes at least twice as wide but no deeper than the plant's root ball. Break up clumpy back fill and only mix in enough compost or leaf mold to ensure good root-to-soil contact. Mix in lime according to your soil test. Plant so that top of root ball is slightly above ground level. Mulch up to, but not on top of root ball. Water well!
- ◇ Fertilizing: **DON'T**. Like pruning, nitrogen fertilizer stimulates top growth.

“Hardy” Tropicals

- ◇ Plants that are marginally hardy in USDA Hardiness Zone 7 may require a bit of protection for winter's worst.
- ◇ Cold is the enemy (temperatures dipping below 10 degrees F), but cold, wet feet are the killers.
- ◇ After first frost, **MULCH!**
- ◇ Form a cage around the most tender and add a deep layer of leaves.
- ◇ Be patient in spring. Some of these plants are very slow to emerge.



Annuals

- ◇ Set out forget-me-nots, pansies, snapdragons, violas, sweet William, pinks and other hardy plants for flowering in winter and early spring.

Finally...

Lawns

- * Treat perennial weeds such as mock strawberry and wild garlic this month. Apply a broadleaf herbicide when temperatures are above 50 degrees. Add a spreader-sticker to the mix to help the herbicide stick to skinny leaves.



Water features

- * Cover with lightweight netting (bird netting) to exclude leaves or scoop them out with a pond or pool net to keep the open water available for wildlife.
- * Float a tennis ball in water-filled containers to prevent cracking.
- * Keep water open when freezing occurs by melting an area with a pot of hot water.
- * Don't bang on the ice.

Equipment

- * Bring in decorative glazed ceramic and terracotta pots.
- * Clean and protect tools.
- * Plunge digging tools in a bucket of oily sand to clean and protect.
- * Clean and oil cutting tools.
- * Disconnect and drain hoses. Bring the hoses and all nozzles and sprinklers inside. Cover spigots.
- * Winterize your mower.
 - ◇ Clean mower deck.
 - ◇ Check belts, filters and safety shields.
 - ◇ Drain old oil while engine is still warm to get a complete flush and prevent contaminants from settling back in the oil pan. Refill with new oil.
 - ◇ Empty gas tank and run engine until it stalls.
 - ◇ Lightly oil pivot and wear points to prevent rust.
 - ◇ Clean or replace air filter.



Birds

- * Take down hummingbird feeders, clean and put away for winter.
- * Keep birdbaths clean and filled with open (not frozen) water.



Houseplants

- * Reduce watering and do not fertilize.
- * Some plants that summered outdoors need only to be moved to an unheated garage or crawl space and ignored over winter while they sleep.
- * Purchase amaryllis bulbs and pot them up yourself. Be sure the pot has at least one or more drainage holes. Since amaryllis like to be pot bound, choose a pot that is no more than an inch or two wider than the diameter of the bulb. Clay pots are better than plastic because their added weight will help support the amaryllis, which tends to get top heavy when in bloom. The top third of the bulb should extend above the soil.



Arbor Gate Plant of the Month



Fothergilla spp.

Witch Alder

This native is truly the complete package—a shrub for all seasons, but especially this one. Fascinating flowers that draw the pollinators come on in April—a fluff of creamy stamens unencumbered by petals. Ranging from bright green to frosty blue, depending on the cultivar, the leaves make a lovely foil all summer long. But the real show begins in autumn when this relative of witch hazel puts on the most reliable display of fall color of any tree or shrub that I know.

Fothergilla latifolia can grow as tall as 12 feet, but other species will light up the garden on a smaller scale, whether in full sun or part shade. A slowly colonizing habit may expand *Fothergilla's* footprint but growth is relatively slow and won't encroach on its neighbors. Drought tolerant, once established, but also will tolerate wet soils.

Read more here: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/fothergilla-latifolia/>

