

Gardening's last hurrah about to be sounded

The days are getting shorter and summer's wading down toward fall, but there's no lack of lawn and garden tasks. Michigan State University Extension specialists suggest the following activities are timely in September:

- Order spring-flowering bulbs to plant outdoors in late fall or to force indoors in midwinter. Begin preparing beds now.

- In spring and summer-flowering perennials, including iris, peonies, daylilies and phlox.

- When strawflower blossoms are about half-open, harvest them to dry for arranging this winter. To dry flowers, hang them upside-down in a dry, well-ventilated area out of direct sun.
- After frost has killed the tops, dig tuberous begonias, gladioli, dahlias and cannas and remove the foliage, leaving a short stub. Let the corns and tubers dry for several days and then store them in dry sand or peat moss in a cool, dry storage place. Check them occasionally through the winter and discard any showing signs of mold or decay.

- Save fuschia, colesus, geranium, impatiens and fibrous-rooted begonia plants from frost and enjoy them all winter. Before frost, dig plants out of the garden, cut the tops back by half and pot in a well drained potting mix. Check and for insect problems and diseases before taking plants indoors.

- House plants that spent the summer outdoors should be coming inside when night temperatures start dipping into the 50-degree range. Inspect plants for insect and disease problems and treat or discard them as needed. If you bring insects indoors, the warm temperatures and lack of natural enemies could set off a pest population explosion.
- Summer annuals will continue to bloom until they're killed by frost if you keep watering them and picking off faded flowers and seedheads.

- Induce poinsettias to flower by giving them total darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. daily from about Sept. 20 to Dec. 1.
- Dig chives, parsley and other garden herbs and plant them in containers for a winter windowsill herb garden. Harvest remaining herbs and dry them where they won't be exposed to heat or

direct sunlight.

- Seal leftover flower and vegetable seeds in lightly covered jars and store them in the refrigerator or in a cool, dark storage area.

- Save tomatoes, summer squash, peppers, eggplant and other tender crops from the first killing frost to extend the summer harvest. When frost threatens, cover plants with blankets, newspapers, plastic or some other material that will trap heat given off by the soil. The cole crops — including broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and Brussels sprouts — carrots, parsnips, leeks and spinach will tolerate some frost.

- Continue to weed and water the garden and protect it from late season insect problems. Every weed that you prevent from going to seed now means a few less weed seedlings to deal with

next year. Insects that move in now may overwinter in the garden or nearby areas and be ready to attack plants as soon as they appear in the spring.

- Harvest winter squash and pumpkins before frost and after the fruits have matured and formed a hard rind. Exposure to low temperatures will damage their skins and shorten their life in storage.

- Remove the raspberry canes that fruited this year, and thin weak or broken canes and prune out diseased ones.
- Clean up fallen fruits, leaves and twigs around fruit trees and flowering crabapples. This will reduce the carry-over of this year's insect and disease problems.

- Continue to spray roses to protect them against insects and diseases.
- Prune dead, diseased or damaged limbs from trees.

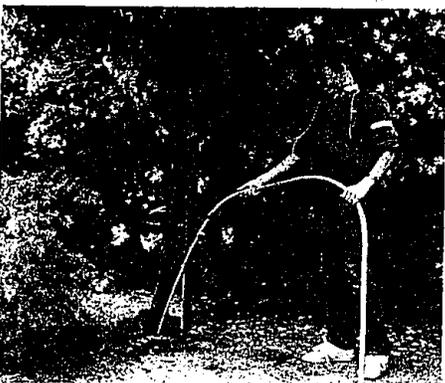
- Plant trees and shrubs and ground covers. Before planting, be sure to remove wire and plastic cord from trunks and stems and remove plastic burials and other nonbiodegradable materials from the soil balls. After planting, water thoroughly and keep them from being uprooted or damaged by the wind.
- If the weather is dry, water trees and shrubs weekly, especially newly planted ones. Do not fertilize woody ornamentals now. This could promote a flush of new growth that would probably be killed or injured by cold weather.

You can fertilize after plants are fully dormant but before the soil freezes. Nutrients applied then will be available to plants as soon as they begin to grow again in the spring.

- Establish a new lawn by Sept. 15.
- Spot seed bare areas in lawns with seed of similar grass species. In sunny lawns, this will probably mean a blend of improved bluegrass cultivars; in shaded lawns, a mixture of bluegrasses and fescues. Loosen the soil before seeding and firm it afterward. Water daily — more often, if necessary — to keep the soil moist until seedlings are well established.

- Fertilize established lawns with a complete fertilizer, such as 20-5-10. Plan to apply another pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet in early November. This will promote root growth until the soil freezes and provide nutrients for a slow spring green-up. Then, next year, hold off fertilizing until mid-May or later.

- Keep raking leaves as they fall so they don't mat on the lawn and smother the grass plants. Add leaves to the compost pile. Chopping or grinding them and mixing with a little soil and fertilizer will speed decomposition.



Watering the garden protects it from late-season insect problems. Trees and shrubs, especially newly planted ones, should be watered weekly if the weather is dry.

class reunions

As a public service, the Observer and Eccentric Newspapers will print announcements of class reunions. Send the information to Marie McGee, Observer and Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Please include a first and last name with telephone numbers.

- **DOMINICAN**
The Dominican High School class of 1953 will hold a 30-year reunion Sept. 25 at Lechmore Country Club, 1018 Sunningdale Drive, Grosse Pointe Woods. Brunch at 11:30 a.m. For tickets, call Sally Hill Toenjes at 881-9065.

- **WARREN MOTT**
Warren Mott High School class of 1973 will hold a 10-year reunion at the Warren Chateau on Sept. 16. For more information, call 751-2110.

- **WAYNE STATE**
Wayne State University classes of 1933-34 are invited to participate in the 50th anniversary celebration planned for Sept. 23-25 on campus. A variety of special events are planned. For more details, call the Alumni House, 577-2279.

- **JOHN GLENN**
John Glenn High School class of 1973 will hold a 10-year reunion Oct. 22. For further information, call 728-3962.

- **BISHOP BORGESS**
Bishop Borgess class of 1974 is planning a class reunion. Anyone interested in helping with plans is asked to call 533-4039, 464-6947 or 427-2283.

- **VISITATION**
Visitation High School class of 1958 will hold a 25-year reunion Saturday, Oct. 8 at Tapperooneys restaurant. Call 421-6416 for more information.

- **FARMINGTON**
The Farmington High School class of 1973 will hold its 10-year reunion on Oct. 8 at the Chateau of Farmington Hills. For more information, call 471-1154.

- **REDFORD**
Redford High School class of 1973 will hold a 10-year reunion Oct. 8. For more information, call Patti Rac, 422-4080 or Mike Pardonnet, 425-5377.

- **COOLEY**
Cooley High School class of 1943 will hold a 40-year reunion Oct. 15. Write Dick Crissman, 585 36th Street SW, Grand Rapids 49505 or call at 616-534-4927.

- **GARDEN CITY**
Garden City High School class of 1958 will hold a 25-year reunion Sept. 17 at 6 p.m. at Westworld, Westland. For more information, call Judy Bood, 455-7021.

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