

Last Garden Chores Assure Brighter Spring

By BETTY FRANKEL
Special Writer

When November arrives, the gardener knows that the gardening season is over, at least until next year. It is time to finish up the chores and then turn your attention to indoor gardening.

Finish all planting that has been planned for this fall. Get tulips planted, covering them with about six inches of soil. All other bulbs should have been in the ground before this, but if you still have some on hand, don't delay, but get them planted.

The small, early bulbs should be planted only two inches deep. Daffodils and other narcissus and hyacinth bulbs get planted at the same depth as tulips, so that there is approximately six inches of soil over the top of the bulb.

Rather than planting all these bulbs in the ground, you might consider planting some in pots and forcing them into bloom for some cheerful flowers indoors. They need about eight weeks in a cool dark place to form roots before they are brought into a warm, bright place to make top growth.

Tulips and some varieties of narcissus are not difficult to force. Hyacinths are easy and can even be grown in a glass of water rather than in soil. Crocuses and other little bulbs are charming grouped in a small pot.

Plants Need Baths, Too

Nature's trees, plants and shrubs are the oldest "air purifiers" in the world, and because of that, indoor plants appreciate a bath now and then to wash away the dust and other impurities they collect from the atmosphere.

In their publication on green survival, the American Association of Nurserymen points out that one major city, Los Angeles, frequently washes its street trees with a detergent solution for the same reason.

Small Tree Needs Help

This is a time when you can plant or transplant trees. The newly planted tree needs some support for the first year in its new home.

The American Association of Nurserymen suggests that a small tree receive that support from a wooden stake about a foot longer than the height of the tree planted in the ground as close as possible to the trunk. Tie the tree to the stake with wire, using a small piece of garden hose around the wire to act as a cushion between it and the wood.

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on, though until you have the plant in or at least near the planting hole.

Much of the health and success of next year's garden depends on things you do this fall. For instance, if you give all your evergreens a thorough soaking in late fall before the ground freezes they will look fresher all winter and will actually green up earlier and be livelier and healthier next spring.

Also, if Mother Nature does not supply adequate rainfall all trees and shrubs that have been planted at any time during this past year should have a good soaking, too. When you have completed the watering chores drain the hose, coil it up and hang it on a peg in the garage, or better still, in the basement if you have one.

Leaves should be raked from the lawn. If they are allowed to stay on the lawn all winter they may well kill the grass beneath them. Besides, the lawn will look tidier and more attractive without these soggy leaves coming into view every time the snow melts away. Put those leaves on a compost pile and they will be converted to good humus and can be recycled back into the soil.

Also, the yard will look tidier if you get out the clippers and edger and trim and edge the beds and along the walk and drive. This will save you from having to do it next spring when you will be very busy with a great many other garden chores.

For the sake of neatness give the lawn a final cutting before putting the mower away. This will be good for the general health of the lawn, anyway. Long tangled, matted grass is more prone to fungus infections.

Before you put the mower away, drain any remaining gas from the tank. Tuck a plastic drop cloth around the mower and it will stay dust free all winter.

Clean up the spreader and hand tools, too. If you give them a once-over with a slightly oily rag the film of oil that remains on them will help keep them from rusting.

One of the most important things you can do for next year's flower and vegetable gardens is to do a good clean-up job this fall.

Remove all the old vegetable and annual plants. Cut back all perennials to within a few inches of the ground, except for the few that have a rosette of leaves that stays green all winter. It pays to gas from the tank. Tuck a plastic drop cloth around the mower and it will stay dust free all winter.

Clean up the spreader and

garden early next spring.

After the beds are empty, scratch up the soil around the perennials, and give the empty vegetable and annual beds a thorough spading, leaving the soil in rather rough clumps. This will turn up and expose many of the insects and insect eggs that may be in the soil, and exposure to freezing weather will kill them.

If the soil is left in clumps the moisture can penetrate better and the frost action will help condition and improve the texture of the soil.

Don't forget to clean up planter boxes and pots and window boxes. If evergreen branches are tucked into these they will look decorative all winter.

A winter mulch is not necessary on all plants. It is used not to keep the ground warm, but to keep it frozen. Alternate thawing and freezing is hard on newly planted perennials, so plan to mulch some of these after the ground has frozen. Even green branches or straw can be used.

Roses should be mulched, however. You can bring soil from another part of the garden and mound it in a conical shape around the canes, or you can use a material that will hold leaves around the plants.

The garden can be pretty in winter and make a dramatic scene to view from a picture window. This is especially true if there are evergreens to catch the snow and bright berries and colorful stems to provide a cheerful accent.

Why not consider adding a few plants just to provide winter cheer. Also, put out a bird feeder to entice birds to the yard, and the garden will be lively all winter.

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