

Longevity Key

A thirteen-year study has turned up some apparent keys to longevity. One is general happiness; the other is satisfaction in one's satisfaction. If you're not happy in your work the best place to look for a better job is in the OBSERVER WANT ADS. The ObserverWant marketplace is packed with attractive offers. Check now!

Suburban Gardener

Last Few Garden Chores For Golden Autumn Days

By BETTY FRANKEL

The golden days of autumn are Nature's bonus. The air seems crisp and clean, the sky a clear untainted blue, the perfect foil for flaming trees and brightening birds and wheeling flocks of birds.

The sugar maple trees present us with their precious gifts - bright beauty in the distant landscape that shines more brightly at close range. Each falling leaf is like a golden essence, a distillate of all the yellow leaves that clothe the boughs. They spread a golden carpet beneath the backyard tree. Even the light, itself, shining through the yellow-leaved branches becomes a golden hue.

Take advantage of these golden days whenever they occur. Finish up the gardening chores. Clean up the flower and shrubbery beds. Do not leave fallen leaves or spent plants because they can harbor insects and diseases. A good cleanup program this fall can help make a healthier garden next summer.

This is still time to plant bulbs for spring bloom. Tuck a few clumps of the little bulbs beneath the shrubbery where they can be secured in the kitchen window, or plant some tulips in front of the evergreens by the front door where they will provide a cheery welcome next April or May.

BUY SOME paper white narcissus to force indoors during the winter. They need only pebbles and water and in six weeks they produce fragrant white flowers. Hyacinths and crocus bulbs are easy to force, too.

Tulips and daffodils work best if they have a period of time outdoors before they are brought inside. Put the pots in a shallow trench covered with straw or leaves.

Summer bulbs should be lifted and stored indoors until next spring. This includes canas, dahlias, gladiolus and tuberous begonias. Those red and gold leaves carpeting the ground should be raked before winter sets in. They can damage the lawn if left there all winter. Do not burn them, however. They are really a very valuable commodity. With a little effort they can be composted and turned into humus that can be used for enriching the garden or for potting house plants.

Pile them up in an out of the way spot and keep them moist. Layer with some good black dirt, or some of last year's compost to hasten the decay process, and unless you're strictly an organic gardener, sprinkle a little commercial fertilizer onto the layers to further encourage the development of the decay bacteria. Compost can be made in large plastic bags, or even in plastic garbage cans, but if you have a lot of leaves an open pile seems best.

Resistant Elm Trees Sought

A collection of elm trees from all over the world is the basis of Michigan State University research aimed at finding species of elms which are resistant to Dutch elm disease. Over 600 seed lots were obtained in the summer of 1968 from such areas as Asia, Russia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Pakistan, India, Holland and Italy. MSU forestry research workers, headed by Dr. J. W. Wright, planted the seed lots as soon as they arrived on campus.

This spring-two years after planting-the 30,000 individual elm trees of 10 different species were inoculated with Dutch elm disease. Initial indications of which elm tree strains carry some resistance to the disease will be available in 1971, according to Gary Long, assistant to Dr. Wright. In about five years MSU researchers hope to have resistant trees they can recommend for planting.

"If we were to shoot for a variety that has 100 per cent resistant, we would probably have to do 40 years' worth of research."

WHEN THE leaves blaze brightly, the planting season has arrived for deciduous trees and shrubs. These plants are becoming dormant and can be moved with relatively little shock. Most shrubs and small trees can be moved bare-rooted but large trees should have a ball of earth around the roots.

Remember that trees and shrubs are relatively permanent investments. Decide where they are to be planted and then dig a good hole. Don't try any short cuts or cut rate methods, but make the hole larger and deeper than the roots or ball of earth and fill in around the roots with good soil.

Plant a few shrubs that will enhance the garden during the winter with red berries, red bark or other interesting characteristics. Plant shrubs that will attract birds. Also, put out feeders of habit and it may take several weeks before they come to the feeders.

Fall Is Time For Soil Test

Research has proven that adequate amounts of the right kind of fertilizer applied in the fall months of the year to lawns, shrubs and trees will improve the growth vigor of the plants, says Don Juchartz, Wayne County Extension director. He further points out that applying fertilizer "by guess" often leads to nutrient imbalances in the soil that can disrupt plant growth. There are many locations in the metropolitan Detroit area that can test soil, including the Wayne, Oakland and Macomb County Cooperative Extension Service. If sending or bringing soil to the Wayne County office prepare a representative sample of dry soil and mark it legibly with name, address, telephone number and the use to which the soil is to be put (lawn, shrubs, vegetable garden, etc.) and bring or send to the Wayne County Cooperative Extension Service, 5455 Wayne Road, P.O. Box 550, Wayne, Michigan 48184.

There is a 50 cent charge per sample and recommendations for fertilizer applications will be made by extension agents.

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