



Autumn Garden Care  
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When autumn arrives, there are always special things to do in the garden. Here is a list of things to keep you busy this fall.

Helping out migrating birds -- Ruby-throated hummingbirds and other birds are on their way south now, and some will have to fly up to 2,000 miles. Help prepare them for the journey with the blossoms and feeders in your yard. Clean and refill hummingbird feeders every day or two, to avoid deadly bacterial buildup.

Protecting your property -- Keep your property fire safe by pruning trees and plants away from the house, controlling ground litter, removing dead limbs, and keeping paths and driveways cleared.

Planting -- This is your last chance to plant until next spring. As soon as it gets a little cooler, plant all your new container-grown and balled-burlap trees, shrubs, flowers, and new grass, so they have a chance to become acclimated before winter sets in. Ideally, planting should be done by mid-October, so roots have time to get established before the ground freezes.

Now is a good time to plant cool-season annuals. Keep them well-watered since we can still experience some warm weather. When the ground temperature drops below 60 degrees, plant spring-flowering bulbs and sow cool-season vegetables like beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, radishes, spinach, and turnips.

Fertilizing -- Fertilize and water roses, but do NOT prune them now. Fertilize azaleas, camellias, hydrangeas, and rhododendrons with a fertilizer for acid-loving plants. Fertilize your lawn, if needed.

Pruning, then NOT pruning -- Make cuttings of your favorite perennials to root indoors over the winter. Woody perennials can be pruned back and mulched now. Fall is the latest time you should prune many flowering shrubs. Pruning any later may remove the buds of next year's flowers. Also, the flush of new growth that occurs on any shrub after pruning can be damaged by cold weather, and that can harm the entire plant, so no further pruning should be done until plants go dormant. The UC Master Gardeners' website ([http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Landscape Trees/](http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Landscape_Trees/)) and other reliable gardening sources offer pruning information about specific plants.

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Maintenance -- Keep deadheading your annuals and perennials to extend their bloom time. This is a good time to divide your perennials to keep them healthy, vigorous, and multiplying. Label bulbs and tender perennials before they disappear for the winter.

Remove all rotting fruit from fruit trees and clean up fallen fruit and debris. Remove all weeds and dead plant material from your garden beds. Dry, disease-free debris and fallen leaves can be used for mulch or compost. Consider shredding your leaves, which makes for easier decomposition. Mulch should be 1-2" deep and kept at least two inches away from plants and six inches from tree trunks to avoid excessive moisture buildup and disease.

Water -- Irrigate your fruit trees deeply. As the weather gets colder, stop or reduce watering to deciduous trees or shrubs once they have lost their leaves. However, if you have established evergreens or plant new ones this fall, make sure they get plenty of water before the ground freezes -- they will use that water all winter.

If you get a lot of autumn rain, raise your outdoor pots off the ground with bricks or 'pot feet' so your plants' roots won't be sitting in water. Reduce the watering of your indoor plants.

Special projects -- Harvest and preserve your herbs. Dry or freeze them, based on the kind of herb involved. Make sure to follow all instructions (available on-line) to ensure great results.

Save the seeds from your favorite flowers. Make sure they are completely dry. Write the plant's name and the date on an envelope, place the seeds in the envelope, put the envelope in an airtight container, and store it in a cool, dark, dry spot.

Organize your garden supplies and clean your garden tools. Then order seed and garden catalogs to study over the winter so you can start all over again next year!

Master Gardeners continue to offer gardening classes on-line. A five-part online class series, Gardening in a Changing Climate, will be held on Wednesdays from 3:00 to 4:30 PM beginning September 9 (you are welcome to join us midway through the series). Please go to [http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public\\_Education\\_Classes/](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education_Classes/) for registration instructions and to see all upcoming online classes.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Master Gardener events will for the foreseeable future be limited. Please see our calendar of events for learning opportunities. We realize our public classes are valued by County residents and we especially appreciate your continued support and understanding during this public health challenge.

The Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, is open to the public, from 9 AM to noon on Fridays and Saturdays. State and county public health guidelines require us to limit visitors to ten at a time (including our docents) and ask that they practice social distancing and wear face coverings. Restrooms will not be open. Check [http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration\\_Garden](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden) for more information.

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Have a gardening question? Master Gardeners are working hard remotely and can still answer your questions. Leave a message on our office telephone: 530-621-5512, or use the “Ask a Master Gardener” option on our website: [mgeldorado.ucanr.edu](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu). We’ll get back to you! Master Gardeners are also on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

Stay safe and follow recommended health and sanitation practices in the coming weeks.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see <http://ucanr.edu/mastergardener> e-news.