



GARDEN TIPS FOR OCTOBER

David Hillock

Turfgrass

- You can continue to replant or establish cool-season lawns like fescue.
- The mowing height for fescue should be lowered to approximately 2½ inches for fall and winter cutting.
- Broadleaf weeds like dandelions can be easily controlled during October ([HLA-6601](#)).
- Mow and neatly edge warm-season lawns before killing frost.

Ornamentals

- Plant cool-season annuals like pansies, ornamental cabbage or kale, snapdragons and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.
- Begin planting spring-flowering bulbs like tulips, hyacinths, crocus and daffodils.
- Good companion plants for bulbs are ground covers such as ajuga, vinca, English ivy, alyssum, moneywort, thrift, phlox, oxalis and leadwort.
- Peonies, daylilies, and other spring-flowering perennials should be divided or planted now.
- Dig and store tender perennials like cannas, dahlias, and caladiums in a cool, dry location.
- Purchase trees from nurseries and garden centers at this time to select the fall color you prefer.
- Many perennials can be planted at this time and the selection is quite nice.
- Plant fall mums and asters and keep them watered during dry conditions. Don't crowd since they take a couple of years to reach maturity.
- Plant container-grown trees and shrubs this month.
- Check and treat houseplants for insect pests before bringing them indoors and repot rootbound plants.

Fruits & Vegetables

- Dig sweet potatoes and harvest pumpkins and winter squash.
- Remove green fruit from tomato plants when frost threatens.
- Harvest Oriental persimmons and pawpaws as they begin to change color.
- There is still time to plant radishes and mustard in the fall garden.
- Use a cold frame device to plant spinach, lettuce and various other cool-season crops for production most of the winter.
- Plant cool-season cover crops like Austrian winter peas, wheat, clover, and rye in otherwise fallow garden plots.
- Remove all debris from the garden to prevent overwintering of various garden pests.
- Start new planting bed preparations now with plenty of organic matter.

Water Gardens

- Take tropical water garden plants indoors when water temperatures near 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Close the water garden for the winter by placing hardy plants in the deeper areas of the pool. Stop feeding the fish.
- Cover water gardens with bird netting to catch dropping leaves during the winter months.

Twig Girdlers

David Hillock

Recently I have seen many small branches from the tips of my oak tree lying on the ground; they are quite messy and I have to pick several up each day. These small branches accumulating on the ground are a good indicator of an insect called a twig girdler.

The twig girdler is a small beetle that has one generation in Oklahoma per season. Some indicators that these branches lying on the ground are due to include: the presence of clean-cut twigs, and/or dangling (flagged) branch tree. The Twig girdler female chews a V-shaped groove around a small it. She then will lay an egg underneath the bark on the girdled limb. This limb dies quickly and will fall to the ground with the larva inside. The small overwinter in the fallen twig. During the following spring, the larva feeding, consuming most of the wood. As the larva grows it bores further down into the twig and fills the tunnel with wood shavings and waste. Pupation occurs in a cavity within the twig. Adults emerge in late summer and early fall.



growing twig girdlers tips within a twig, girdling portion of the larva will resumes

Twig girdlers are a pest that can be managed easily with good sanitation practices. Homeowners should collect and destroy infested twigs and branches they find on the ground, beginning in the fall or early spring. This will eliminate the overwintering larvae. Infested limbs should also be pruned out and burned, if feasible. Sanitation is a cheap environmentally friendly way to manage these pests, especially for small plantings.

Alternatives for Turf in Shady Areas

David Hillock

Keeping turfgrass alive in shade in Oklahoma is quite challenging to say the least. Heavy shade created by dense canopies of trees in small residential areas creates an environment that is far from desirable for turfgrasses, even for the turf-type tall fescues, which are moderately shade tolerant. Under such circumstances, stresses such as poor light quality and quantity, competition for water and nutrients, poor air movement, and leaf litter usually result in failure to establish a lawn.

Where such conditions exist and all attempts of establishing a turfgrass have failed, consider shade tolerant perennial flowers, groundcovers, or mulched beds. Granted you will not be able to romp and play on the perennials and groundcovers, but you won't have to mow them once a week either.

Perennials and groundcovers that tend to compete well with trees for water and nutrients once established.

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Carpet Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*)

Common Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*, *V. major*)

Other plants that may be considered depending on available light and water.

For Deep Shade:

Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*)
Black Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* ‘Arabicus’)
Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium nipponicum* var. *pictum*)
Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*)
Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*)
Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*)
Allegheny Spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*)
Japanese Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*)
Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)
Crested Iris (*Iris cristata*)
Wild Gingers (*Asarum* spp.)

For Light Shade:

Moneywort, Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*)
Bishop’s Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria* ‘Variegatum’)
Dwarf Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*)
Carpet Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*)
Spotted Deadnettle (*Lamium maculatum*)
Liriope, Lily-turf (*Liriope muscari*, *L. spicata*)
Hostas, Plantain Lily (*Hosta* spp.)
Strawberry Geranium (*Saxifraga stolonifera*)
Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*)
Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)
Lenten Rose (*Helleborus* spp.)
Woodland Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)
Alleghany Spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*)
Japanese Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*)
Crested Iris (*Iris cristata*)
Wild Gingers (*Asarum* spp.)
Epimediums (*Epimedium* spp.)



For additional suggestions of alternatives for shade see fact sheet [HLA-6608](#) Managing Turfgrass in the Shade in Oklahoma.

Fall - A Good Time to Control Broadleaf Weeds

David Hillock

Summer temperatures make it too risky to use the broadleaf postemergence herbicides due to the volatility and threat of drift, which could then damage desirable plants in the landscape. However, the cooler daytime temperatures associated with fall make it an excellent time to think again about controlling broadleaf weeds in the yard. Dandelion and other broadleaf weeds are easily controlled with post emergence herbicides such as those that contain a Trimec solution or other 2, 4-D formula. Remember to spray early in the day when winds are low and before temperatures begin to get too warm. Care should be used when applying these herbicides around desirable landscape plants. Do not over apply especially around tree and shrub roots. Spot spray when possible as it is not necessary to do a blanket cover spray when only few weeds actually exist in the yard.

Spraying young weeds as they first appear this fall will be more effective than waiting until the foliage is more mature. Mature foliage resists the herbicide more easily than the younger shoots. Always read and follow label directions!!

Plant Spring-Flowering Bulbs Now!

David Hillock



The latter part of this month and into November is the time to plant spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, etc. Be sure to get to the garden centers early so you can pick out the largest and healthiest of bulbs. They will bloom better for you than the smaller, discount types. Most bulbs should be planted to a depth that is about 2 times the diameter of the bulb. Be sure to plant your bulbs in well-drained soil; most will rot in our heavy, wet, clay soils during the winter if proper drainage is not provided.

Tulips typically don't last more than one or two seasons so don't expect them to perennialize like daffodils. Don't forget to try some of the other spring-flowering species besides the typical ones, such as: *Alstroemeria ligtu* (Peruvian lily), *Allium* spp. (Giant allium), *Anemone coronaria* (Poppy anemone), *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood anemone), *Belamcanda chinensis* (Blackberry lily or leopard flower), *Convallaria majalis* (Lily-of-the-Valley), *Crocus* spp. (Crocus), *Fritillaria imperialis* (Crown imperial), *Fritillaria melagris* (Checkered lily), *Galanthus* spp. (Snowdrop), *Muscari* spp. (Grape hyacinth), *Scilla campanulata*, also *Hyacinthoides hispanica* (Wood hyacinth or squill), and *Scilla* spp. (Squill).

In addition to spring-flowering bulbs, don't forget that pansies can be planted now along with flowering cabbage and kale, and other cool-season flowers. The pansies will be quite happy through most of the winter and come spring, by the time the bulbs are popping through the ground, they will begin to delight you with a colorful display.

Pecan Harvest & Storage

Becky Carroll

Pecan harvest is just a few weeks away for some growers. Homeowners should remember that the earlier you can harvest, the less likely that crows, bluejays and squirrels will be taking their share. As soon as the shucks open, the pecan is ripe and ready to be harvested. The early harvested pecans will need a few days of dry time because of the high moisture content. Spread them out on a screen or in a mesh bag and use a fan to dry them out quicker. Dry the pecans until the kernel or nutmeat will snap when broken in half. If the kernel is rubbery, it needs more drying time. A few more days with a fan will dry them down to a good moisture level for storage. When the pecans are dry, either take to a custom cracker or freeze the nuts in the shell. Don't delay proper storage techniques or quality will start to suffer within a few weeks at room temperature.



Pawnee at shuck split on September 27, 2016 at Cimarron Valley Research Station near Perkins, OK.

If left at room temperature, pecans will become rancid. Pecans have a high oil content and these heart healthy oils will begin to spoil in about 3 months. If properly handled, pecans can be stored for many years. Pecans should be stored in an airtight

container in the freezer. They can absorb other flavors from the freezer and should be kept in freezer bags or containers. Unshelled pecans will hold their quality longer but shelled pecan kernels can be frozen successfully for 2-3 years. Be sure to save a couple of pounds of your best varieties or natives to enter in the state pecan show. Details to enter are included in another article this month.



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