

Gardening Tips for November

According to Better Homes & Gardens, the thermometer may dip to freezing after dark, but days are pleasant for outdoor chores. Continue planting, and savor the pretty fall scenery. This is the ideal time for planting evergreens, deciduous trees, spring bulbs, perennials, and annuals. You can even add herbs to the garden now. Grab your trowel and start digging.

Trees and Shrubs

- Consider mature size when selecting a tree or shrub for a location. This will save you a lifetime of pruning a too-big plant to fit in a too-small space.
- Wait to plant azaleas or crape myrtles until spring, when you can buy plants in flower to ensure you're getting the exact hue you want.
- Water new woody plantings daily for the first month. After that, check soil and water when it's dry.

Perennials & Bulbs

- Plant peonies now. Use variants with reliable reputations for Southern gardens: 'Sarah Bernhardt' (pink) and 'Festiva Maxima' (white). Be sure to choose a permanent planting spot -- these beauties resent being moved.
- Consider creating drifts of small-flowered daffodils. These types naturalize readily in Southern gardens, woods, and lawns.

Edibles

- Try using herbs to add edible interest to planting areas. Great candidates include parsley, chard, and French sorrel.
- Get strawberries in the ground early this month so roots are firmly anchored and growing before soil cools.

Test Garden Tip: Plant amaryllis for pretty holiday color. You can tuck bulbs into pots or simply grow them on pebbles in water like paper-white narcissus. Plant a few extra bulbs to give as gifts.

For cool-season turf and fescues, this month is the key feeding of the year. Aim for a Thanksgiving application. Why is this feeding so vital? Warm soil allows roots to take up nutrients, which will help grasses withstand next summer's intense heat.

Do not fertilize warm-season grasses. Get your herbicide out for wild garlic and wild onion. In a warm-season lawn, these upright clumps of bright green stand out like a sore thumb.

Other weeds to tackle this month include annual bluegrass and trampweed. Wait until February to treat trampweed in cool-season lawns.

Southern lawns need lime every two to three years. Ideally, you should have a soil test to know just how much to apply. If that's not possible, apply 75 pounds of dolomitic limestone per 1,000 square feet. Divide that amount in half and make two applications one month apart.

Test Garden Tip: Rake leaves on lawn to prevent disease and grass suffocation. As long as leaves continue to fall, keep your mower fueled and ready to chop and gather leaves in one easy pass.

Leaves

Use leaves as mulch on planting beds or add them to the compost pile. Chopped leaves make a nice layer over a fallow [vegetable garden](#) to insulate soil, which allows worms to work longer into the year

Water Garden

Maintain a net over [water gardens](#) to keep autumn leaves from falling in. If your vinyl-lined pond hosts frogs, sink a plastic dishpan filled with clay soil into water. Frogs will burrow into the soil to hibernate.

New Plantings

Thin seedlings of salad greens come to life from last month's planting. Add them to the salad bowl for garden-fresh flavor.

Firewood

Stack firewood off the ground, even if you're storing it on concrete. An elevated pile allows air to circulate beneath it, which helps season wood. Never stack wood against a house, shed, or other structures, as this can attract wood-infesting insects. You can cover a woodpile on top, but keep sides open for air circulation.

Irrigation

Drain hoses and coil for storage. Ideally, store them in a frost-free location, but **outdoor storage** is fine. Remove all watering wands, spray nozzles, hose Y's, and quick-connects for indoor storage.

Close interior shut-off valves to exterior faucets. Drain faucets and leave slightly open.

Test Garden Tip: If temperatures are above freezing, ticks are still active. Use caution when hiking or working in a woodsy or weedy area. In your own yard, maintain weedy areas to limit hiding places.

Compost Wisdom

If you know leaves are diseased, don't add them to your compost pile. Most home compost piles don't get hot enough to kill disease organisms. If you're unsure, dispose of the the leaves at a commercial or municipal composting site. In these locations, large compost piles produce heat that can kill pests and diseases.

Welcome Worms

You'll improve your vegetable garden's soil if you take time this fall to turn soil. You can do this by hand, with a hoe or broad fork, or using a tiller. You'll destroy earthworm tunnels by doing this, but you'll also expose overwintering pests to cold temperatures.

Give the worms a break by adding a layer of chopped leaves to soil. Water the leaves or wait for rain to do the job. Over winter, worms will work leaves into soil, creating new tunnels and improving soil.

Improve soil even more -- and delight your worms -- by sowing a fall cover crop, like winter rye or hairy vetch. Turn the crop under in early spring before planting.

Fruit Crops

Fall cleanup is important for maintaining strong and healthy fruit trees. Follow this checklist to ensure your trees prosper:

- Fallen fruit, mummified fruit: garden and destroy.
- Diseased branches, twigs: prune and destroy.
- Diseased leaves: rake and destroy.

It's also vital to keep grass and weeds clipped short around the base of tree trunks as winter approaches. This limits hiding places for rodents, which like to feast on bark through winter.

Test Garden Tip: Test soil in fall when labs aren't backed up and results come back speedily. By amending and preparing soil this fall, you'll be ready to plant in early spring.

As you clean and organize your **garden shed**, invest energy in tending to tools. When you grab them next spring, they'll be ready for action -- and you won't be slowed down by dull edges or the need for a new shovel.

Digging Tools

Examine all metal blades and handles. Use steel wool to remove rust on blades. Hone sharp edges with a file and vise. Rub oil into metal blades with a rag to prevent rust.

Sand wooden handles with a fine-gauge sandpaper. Rub linseed oil into handles to preserve the wood.

Cutting Tools

Sharpen loppers and pruners with a whetstone or other sharpening device. Spray lubricating oil into joints. Wipe sharpened cutting blades with an oily rag.

Power Tools

Run the fuel out of power tools, including edgers and mowers. Winterize the lawn mower by pulling the spark plug and changing the oil and air filter. Clean all dirt and grass from beneath the chassis. Sharpen the cutting blade.

Test Garden Tip: Devise a simple method to mark your tools so they'll be easier to find, whether they're lying in the grass or carried to a community garden or church work day. Spray-paint handles with a bright color, or add colorful tape.

In Celebration of Alabama's 200th birthday, we encourage everyone to plant trees or plants that are from our native area!

Native Plants for Alabama

Common Name	Family	Genus
Acalypha gracilens	Slender Three Seed Mercury; Short Stalk Copperleaf	EUPHORBIACEAE
Acalypha rhomboidea	Common Three Seed Mercury; Common Copperleaf; Rhombic Copperleaf	EUPHORBIACEAE
Acer leucoderme	Chalk Maple; Pale Maple	ACERACEAE
Acer negundo	Box Elder; Ash Leaf Maple	ACERACEAE
Acer rubrum var. drummondii	Drummond's Maple; Swamp Red Maple	ACERACEAE
Acer rubrum var. rubrum	Red Maple	ACERACEAE
Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple	ACERACEAE
Acmella repens	Creeping Spotflower; Opposite Leaf Spotflower	ASTERACEAE
Actaea racemosa	Common Black Cohosh; Early Black Cohosh; Black Bugbane	RANUNCULACEAE
Adiantum capillus-veneris	Southern Maidenhair Fern; Venus' Hair Fern	PTERIDACEAE
Adiantum pedatum	Northern Maidenhair Fern Common Maidenhair Fern; American Maidenhair	PTERIDACEAE
Aesculus parviflora	Bottlebrush Buckeye	HIPPOCASTANACEAE
Aesculus pavia	Red Buckeye	HIPPOCASTANACEAE
Agalinis decemloba	Ten Lobe False Foxglove	OROBANCHACEAE
Agalinis purpurea	Purple False Foxglove; Large Purple Gerardia	OROBANCHACEAE
Agalinis tenuifolia var. tenuifolia	Slender Leaf False Foxglove	OROBANCHACEAE

<u>Ageratina altissima</u>	Common White Snakeroot; Common Milk Poison	<u>ASTERACEAE</u>
<u>Ageratina aromatica</u>	Lesser Snakeroot; Small Leaf White Snakeroot; Wild Hoarhound	<u>ASTERACEAE</u>
<u>Agrimonia microcarpa</u>	Low Agrimony; Small Fruit Groovebur; Small Fruit Agrimony	<u>ROSACEAE</u>
<u>Agrimonia rostellata</u>	Woodland Agrimony; Beaked Agrimony; Beaked Groovebur	<u>ROSACEAE</u>
<u>Agrostis eliottiana</u>	Elliott's Bentgrass; Southern Bentgrass; Elliott's Bent	<u>POACEAE</u>
<u>Agrostis perennans</u>	Autumn Bentgrass; Upland Bent; Autumn Bent	<u>POACEAE</u>
<u>Ajuga reptans</u>	Carpet Bugle; Bugleweed; Blue Bugle	<u>LAMIACEAE</u>
<u>Albizia julibrissin</u>	Silktree; Mimosa	<u>FABACEAE</u>
<u>Alisma subcordatum</u>	American Water Plantain; Southern Water Plantain	<u>ALISMATACEAE</u>