

Horticulture Hints



Fall 2006
LSU
AgCenter
Research & Extension

Landscape Gardening and Ornamentals

Cool-season Flowers

Cool-season bedding plants can be planted now to make your landscape an exciting and colorful place this fall, winter and especially next spring. Careful bed preparation and thoughtful planning when selecting the plants to grow will help make sure you are pleased with the results of your efforts.

The bedding plants we plant this time of year prefer cool to mild days and chilly to cold nights. Most of these plants are hardy down to at least 20 degrees, and gardeners in both South and North Louisiana have a good selection to choose from.

- *Cool-season bedding plants 4-8 inches tall:* Sweet alyssum, lobelia,* pansy, Johnny-jump-up, viola, primrose,* cyclamen,* petunia,* dwarf stock, dwarf snapdragon, ornamental kale and cabbage and annual phlox.
 - *Cool-season bedding plants 8-15 inches tall:* Medium-sized snapdragons, dwarf toadflax,* candytuft, calendula,* bluebonnet, dianthus, sweet William, dwarf nicotiana,* wallflower and California poppy.
 - *Cool-season bedding plants taller than 15 inches:* Iceland poppy, peony-flowered poppy, toadflax,* tall snapdragons, stock, statice, larkspur, delphinium, hollyhock, sweet peas (vine) and nicotiana.*
- *These plants are more reliably hardy in South Louisiana.
- Cool-season bedding plants easily direct seeded: Alyssum, Johnny-jump-up, bluebonnet,* calendula, annual phlox, nasturtium, sweet peas,* larkspur,* poppies.*

*These plants resent transplanting and are generally best direct-seeded where they will grow.

Trees and Shrubs for Fall and Winter Color

You can include many trees and shrubs in your landscape that will provide significant color in fall and winter year after year.

Although decidedly less than spectacular this far south, late November is when the leaves of some deciduous trees turn various colors as they get ready to drop. A few of the trees that reliably color up well in Louisiana include: ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*); sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*); Chinese pistachio (*Pistachia chinensis*); Callery pears, such as the Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana* Bradford); black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*); crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*); dogwood (*Cornus florida*); Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*); southern sugar maple (*Acer barbatum*); and some oaks. Generally, the farther south you live in Louisiana, the less fall color you will see.

The leaves of some evergreen shrubs, such as azaleas and junipers, take on new colors as chilly to cold weather occurs. The most spectacular of these shrubs is the dwarf nandinas ('Fire Power', 'Harbour Dwarf', 'Woods Dwarf' and others). When grown in full sun, their foliage turns from green with tints of burgundy to bright red, burgundy, gold, orange and scarlet in winter, then back to green in late spring.

Plants also provide color in fall and winter with fruit. Hollies, with their brilliant red berries, are notable in this regard. Excellent choices for Louisiana include the popular Savannah holly and Foster's holly (*Ilex x attenuata* 'Savannah' and 'Fosteri'), both small trees. A great thing about holly berries is that they are excellent wildlife food for birds. Shrubby hollies also produce colorful berries. Cultivars include 'Burford', 'Dwarf Burford,' 'Nellie R. Stevens,' 'Needlepoint,' 'Dixie Star,' 'Dixie Flame' and many others.

Beautiful native hollies include the yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) and winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*). The deciduous holly and winterberry are unique since they drop their leaves in winter, unlike other commonly grown hollies, which are evergreen. Once the leaves fall, the bright red berries which literally cover the branches put on a traffic stopping display.

For flowers in the fall and early winter, choose sasanquas (*Camellia sasanqua*). Sasanquas are one of those indispensable shrubs for Louisiana landscapes and bloom from October well into December. Dwarf types stay under 3 feet, and standard varieties slowly grow from 10 to 12 feet tall and can be trained as a clipped hedge, large shrub or tree shape. Camellias (*Camellia japonica*) will begin to bloom in November and continue through the winter until spring.

Roses are also important for fall and early winter color. Everblooming roses put on a wonderful show in October and November and will often continue to bloom through mid- December and beyond, weather permitting.

Although generally not known for their fall blooming, azaleas that bloom during seasons other than spring are becoming more popular. Particularly notable are some of the Robin Hill azaleas such as 'Watchet' and 'Conversation Piece,' the popular Glen Dale cultivar called 'Fashion' and many others. The Encore azalea series is also well known for fall bloom.

Fragrant Cool-season Bedding Plants

Lots of cool season flowers can be planted in the fall. Color always seems to be the dominate factor when selecting these plants, and providing color to the landscape really is the plants' primary function. But many of these plants are also fragrant. What a delight it is to walk out on a mild winter or spring day and catch the honey fragrance of sweet alyssum drifting in the air.

Fragrant cool-season annuals should be planted where they can best be appreciated. Placing fragrant bedding plants in the immediate area of entrances and outdoor living areas – in beds, containers or even in hanging baskets (no bending over to smell the flowers) – adds immeasurably to our enjoyment of those spaces.

The following plants should be planted into well-prepared beds or containers located in full- to part-sun locations, although alyssum and nicotiana will also grow well in part shade.

One of the most outstanding fragrant cool-season annuals is stock (*Matthiola incana*). These plants produce spikes of double (occasionally single) flowers in shades of magenta, rose, purple, pink and white from a basal rosette of green or silvery leaves. The fragrance is intense. Depending on the cultivar, stock can range in height from 10 to 30 inches. The shorter types are excellent for bedding or containers, and the taller types are exceptional for cutting.

Sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*) is useful in the cool-season garden for its low spreading growth habit. This trait makes it excellent when planted in the front of flowers beds as an edging or on the edges of raised planters, containers and hanging baskets where it will cascade beautifully over the sides. Sweet alyssum literally covers itself with small flowers in shades of white, pink, rose, lavender or purple. The pleasant fragrance is reminiscent of a honey scent that permeates the air, especially on warm days in enclosed spaces.

Dianthus, or pinks, produce a sweet, spicy fragrance often compared to cloves. Fragrance is highly variable among different types, so smell the flowers at the nursery for at least a light scent. Most people are aware of the fragrance of carnations (*Dianthus caryophyllus*). Although not commonly grown here, carnation plants can be planted in the fall or late winter and grown as a cool-season annual.

The common bedding dianthus are generally cultivars of *Dianthus chinensis* and its hybrids with *D. barbatus*, and many do smell nice. Telstar produces a light scent, comes in a variety of colors and is the best performer of this species in our area.

Also nice are *Dianthus plumarius* and its cultivars such as Sonata with its double carnation-like flowers, or Loveliness, which produces single flowers with lacy fringed petals. Also look for First Love, Pink Melody and Purple Bouquet. All of these produce longer stems making them useful as cut flowers.

Nicotiana is related to tobacco and is commonly called flowering tobacco. It produces a rosette of hairy medium-green leaves with taller stems loosely adorned with flaring five-petal bells. As in the dianthus, fragrance varies from one type to another. Some types of hybrid nicotiana, such as Sensation, do have a wonderful sweet fragrance. And new for 2006 is All-American Selection Award Winner nicotiana, Perfume Deep Purple. This nicotiana has rich purple flowers with a pleasant fragrance in the evening.

Gardeners often don't appreciate the fragrance of petunias until they first encounter it. Most petunias have a light fragrance if you smell the flowers, but occasionally their perfume fills the air on mild, sunny days.

Finally, you simply could not have a fragrant cool-season flower garden without sweet peas (*Lathyrus odoratus*). This vining annual produces flowers that are good for cutting, come in an astounding array of colors and are as fragrant as they are beautiful. Seeds should be planted in November in well-prepared soil in a location that receives a little shade in the afternoon beside something on which the vines can climb (such as a fence or trellis). The seeds will germinate in fall, and the plants will grow slowly through the winter. If temperatures in the teens threaten, cover the vines if possible. Flowering generally begins in March, with the peak occurring in April and ending with the heat of May.



Prune Roses

In Louisiana, our everblooming roses produce two great seasons of bloom – in spring and early summer from April to early June and again in October and November when mild weather is ideal for quality flowers. As a result, we prune twice a year: first in early spring (late January/early February) and again in late summer (late August or early September) to get rose bushes in shape for the fall blooming season.

To prune, first, remove all the dead growth. Make your cuts well into the healthy part of the canes just above a leaf or dormant bud, or remove the dead cane entirely back to its point of origin. You may need loppers for this job.

Next, remove weak, spindly canes the diameter of a pencil or less, particularly those growing in the interior of the plant. This is most important for hybrid tea and grandiflora roses. Many old garden roses, such as the Chinas, and landscape roses have a naturally shrubby, twiggy growth habit. You should not remove twiggy growth in these types of roses unless you want to thin out the interiors. In grafted roses, prune any sprouts originating from below the large, knobby graft union. Do not, however, remove any strong new shoots growing from the graft union.

For hybrid teas and grandifloras, the major part of the pruning involves shortening the remaining vigorous canes. Cut the canes back to about 30 inches from the ground. Ideally, try to make each cut just above a bud that faces outward, away from the inside of the bush. This pruning needs to be done, even if there are flowers on the bush now.

Everblooming old garden roses, shrub roses, landscape roses and other groups may be pruned now, but the pruning required is generally less severe and is done mostly to shape the bush or to control the size of more vigorous cultivars. Use your best judgment when it comes to pruning those roses. I even know a few gardeners who prune their bushier roses with hedge trimmers. This is a particularly effective technique if you have planted a long hedge of roses that would take a long time to prune with hand pruners.

Clean up and dispose of all leaves and prunings from the area and fertilize the roses to encourage vigorous new growth. Use your favorite rose fertil-

izer according to label directions or use general purpose fertilizer appropriate for your area.

Many climbing roses, species roses, ramblers and old garden roses that bloom only once in spring and early summer should not be pruned much now. They will produce their flowers next year on the growth they made this summer. Cutting them back hard after August and anytime before they bloom next year will reduce the number of flowers they produce. Prune them anytime from when they finish blooming through June.

Perennials

Many perennials can be dug and transplanted over the next couple of months. This task provides the opportunity to correct problems you noticed this summer with plants in the wrong location. Do not move or divide perennials that are in bloom now or will be later on this fall. Most perennials can be dug and divided over the next couple of months as well. This is especially important for fast-growing or rampant perennials to keep them under control.

Fertilizing

You may fertilize your shrubs and ground covers still actively growing to encourage one last burst of growth, but do so by late August. Fertilizer applications made later, especially with nitrogen, may keep plants actively growing into early winter, increasing the possibility of cold damage even to plants that would normally be hardy. This is especially true for us here in Louisiana since fall temperatures are generally mild and do not give plants a strong signal to go dormant.

Shrubs and ground covers may be fertilized by sprinkling a granular fertilizer in the bed where they are growing. With shrubs you also may apply the fertilizer around each plant. The size of the shrubs is a factor in determining the amount of fertilizer used. Rates are generally higher for larger shrubs, but check package recommendations for specific amounts.

I am not necessarily saying that you need to go out and fertilize now. If your shrubs and ground covers look healthy and have grown well this summer, there's little indication that fertilizer is needed. If, on the other hand, you have been meaning to fertilize some plantings or feel other plantings would benefit from a fertilizer boost, now is the time to do it – not later.

Plant Trees Properly

November and early December are excellent for planting trees in Louisiana. The soil is still warm, encouraging vigorous root growth. Trees will have several months to get established before next summer's heat. At the same time, the weather is cool, and the trees are going dormant. This reduces stress. Generous rainfall during the winter makes constant attention to watering unnecessary. Planting at this time is especially beneficial for balled and burlapped trees, because they lose so much of their root systems when they are dug.



Plant trees properly using these steps:

-  Dig the hole at least twice the diameter of the root ball and no deeper than the height of the root ball.
-  Remove container-grown trees from the container. If the root ball is tightly packed with thick encircling roots, try to unwrap, open up or even cut some of the roots to encourage them to spread into the surrounding soil. Place the root ball in the hole.
-  Place balled and burlapped trees into the planting hole, remove any nails, nylon twine or wire basket that has been used to secure the burlap and fold down the burlap from the top half of the root ball or remove it.
-  Make the top of the root ball level with or slightly above the surrounding soil. It is critical that you do not plant trees too deep.
-  Thoroughly pulverize the soil dug out from the hole and use this soil, without any additions, to backfill around the tree. Add soil around the tree until the hole is half full, then firm the soil to eliminate air pockets, but do not pack it tightly. Finish filling the hole, firm again and then water the tree thoroughly to settle it in.
-  Generally, do not fertilize trees planted in the fall, although you can apply some slow-release fertilizer next spring. The use of a root stimulator solution is optional.
-  Stake the tree if it is tall enough to be unstable; otherwise, staking is not necessary. Drive two or three stakes firmly into the ground just beyond the root ball. Use strips of cloth or old nylon stockings or use wire (covered with a piece of garden hose where it touches the trunk) tied to the stakes and then to the trunk of the tree. Leave the support in place no more than nine to 12 months.
-  Keep the area 1 to 2 feet out from the trunk of a newly planted tree mulched and free from weeds and grass. This encourages the tree to establish faster by eliminating competition from grass roots. It also prevents lawn mowers and string trimmers from damaging the bark at the base of the tree. Damaging the bark can cause stunting or death. The mulch should be 2 to 4 inches deep and pulled back slightly from the base of the trunk.



✓ Checklist for Fall

1. Begin preparing beds for later planting as the weather cools in late September.
2. Consider taking soil samples from landscape beds and submitting to your parish LSU AgCenter Extension Service office for analysis. Cost is \$7 per sample.
3. If room is available in your landscape, plant a few native trees.
4. Consider incorporating some multi-seasonal flowering azaleas. Fall is a great time to plant!
5. Check your local retail garden center for availability of garden mums. They make a great addition for fall color. Choose plants with lots of unopened buds for a longer display.
6. Harvest pears by late August. The best, fresh-eating quality is produced when the fruit are ripened off of the tree. Pick firm pears that have begun to show yellow or blush red. Wrap them individually in newspaper and place in paper bags or cardboard boxes. They will soften in about 10 days. This is not necessary if you intend to cook and freeze or can the pears.
7. Watch azalea plantings for early fall infestation of lace bugs. Control with Orthene, horticultural oil sprays and other recommended insecticides.
8. Build a compost pile out of leaves, grass clippings and remains from your vegetable garden.
9. In October, root-prune wisteria that has failed to bloom. This encourages flowering next spring. Cut through the roots with a spade in a circle about 30-40 inches from the main trunk.
10. Caladiums generally begin to decline in late September, and then it's time to decide what you want to do with them. If the bed where the caladiums are planted will stay relatively undisturbed and drains well, you may leave the caladium tubers in the ground. If the bed tends to stay wet over the winter, the tubers will rot and would be best dug and stored. Dig the tubers before the foliage disappears.

Dan Gill and Allen Owings

Fruits and Nuts

Pecans

Louisiana is expected to harvest an above-average crop of 15 to 19 million pounds this year. The good pecan crop following two severe hurricane hits on the state is a surprise. The largest crop is in Central Louisiana. Surprisingly, nuts can be found on pecan trees in the southern part of the state that had most of their leaves blown off last fall by hurricanes.

Improving Pecan Quality

Dry weather this summer caused some nut drop and it may have reduced nut size. Late August and September is an important time in filling the pecan.

Adequate water is a key factor that can improve the quality of the pecan crop. If the soil is dry, the tree cannot obtain nutrients from the soil needed to develop a kernel in the nut. Research has shown that the percentage of kernel in the pecan can be improved from 46% with ½ inch of rain to 58% with 2 inches of rain the first two weeks of September.

An inch of water added to the root zone of a pecan tree once a week in early September can substitute for inadequate rainfall. Water should be added once a week. Do not water a little each day. A soaker hose or sprinkler works well. A rain gauge or small container placed on the ground near the pecan tree will indicate when the sprinkler has applied enough water. A general recommendation for a soaker hose is to water for 4 or 5 hours.

Providing water is one thing a homeowner can do to help their trees produce well-filled pecans without a lot of expense.

Harvesting and Storing Pecans

Pecans should be harvested as soon as they fall from the tree (pecan quality deteriorates rapidly if nuts remain on the ground for an extended period of time) and dried to remove excess moisture. An additional reason to harvest pecans as soon as they fall is to reduce excessive loss to squirrels and other critters. Drying can usually be accomplished by storing the pecans in a shallow layer in a warm dry area for approximately 2 weeks. Adding fans and heat can speed drying. Pecans with high moisture content (higher than 6%) do not store well. An easy method to determine if pecans are dry enough for storage is to shell a representative sample of the pecans and check the kernels. Bend the kernels until they break. If the kernels break with a sharp snap they are usually dry enough for storage. Additional drying is needed if kernels do not break with a sharp snap.

Pecans often produce large crops of nuts and then may skip a year or more before producing another good crop. Proper storage can enable individuals to enjoy their pecans until they have another good crop.

Proper storage techniques must be used to maintain good nut quality. Poor storage conditions often leads to darkening of kernels and rancidity of the oils, thus destroying the natural flavor and aroma of the nuts.

Pecans should be stored under refrigerated conditions. Lowering storage temperatures can extend storage life. The average shelf life for pecans at several storage temperatures is shown.

Storage Temp	Average Shelf Life	
	Unshelled	Shelled
70°	6 months	3- 4 months
45°	9 months	6 months
32°	18 months	12 months
20°	30 months	18 months
0°	6-8 years	6-8 years



Unshelled pecans can be stored for a longer period of time than shelled nuts. The unbroken shell protects the kernel from bruising and offers some protection against oxidation and rancidity of the kernel.

If pecans are refrigerated or frozen, they should be placed in airtight containers. Pecan meats readily absorb odors from other foods, resulting in off flavors. If pecans are to be stored at room temperature for an extended period of time, they should be held in containers that are adequately ventilated. Avoid storing improperly dried pecans in plastic bags.

Strawberries in the Home Garden

Strawberries are planted in October in northern Louisiana and November in southern Louisiana for fruiting the following spring.

Varieties

Camarosa, Chandler and Strawberry Festival are good strawberry varieties for Louisiana. They have good fruit size and yield.

Soil and Site Selection

A good strawberry site should be:

- Well-drained, where water does not stand after heavy rains.
- In full sunlight away from shade and tree roots.
- Near a source of water for irrigation.
- In an area with no history of disease and nematode problems.
- In soils high in organic matter, for example, where cover crops or green manure crops have been recently grown and turned under.

Preplant Fertilizer

Apply 8 pounds of a complete fertilizer such as 13-13-13 or 8-24-24 per 100 feet or row in September to avoid fertilizer burn. Wait for a 1- or 2-inch rain or irrigate after fertilization before laying plastic mulch. Black plastic mulch is widely used for strawberries. It controls weeds, warms the soil and keeps the berries clean. Pine straw or other natural mulches can also be used.

Transplanting

When the plants are received, unpack and plant immediately or heel them in. Plants can be killed or seriously damaged by several hours of high temperatures. Make sure roots are moist at all times. Set plants at crown level with soil surface. Plants set at an incorrect depth may lack vigor or die. The plant crown is the thick, fleshy part from which leaves and roots originate. Water immediately after transplanting, and continue watering daily until rains soak the soil.

Spacing

Strawberry plants may be placed single or double in the row. On single-planted rows, space plants 10 to 13 inches apart in the center of the row. On double-planted rows, space them 13 to 16 inches apart, alternating along the row with 12-inch spacing between parallel rows. Double-set rows usually

yield more berries, but single-set rows yield more fruit per plant.

Figs

Figs are shallow-rooted and often come under stress during dry periods. Late summer drought may cause early defoliation and induce dormancy. Regular irrigation is critical in producing quality fruit. Extremely late irrigation promotes succulent growth going into the winter and can cause the tree to be more susceptible to cold weather injury.

Fig rust and Cercospora leaf spot are two leaf diseases that often cause defoliation of figs in the fall. These diseases are controlled with cultural methods since there are no fungicides labeled for figs in Louisiana. Plants should be spaced to allow good air circulation around them. Do not wet leaves during irrigation. Fallen infected leaves should be collected and destroyed during the dormant period.

Feijoa

Feijoa often called pineapple guava or guavasteen is an evergreen shrub that is frequently planted in Louisiana landscapes. It is generally used as a hedge or specimen plant. It has attractive light pink flowers that have thick sweet tasting petals that can be added to salads. Fruit production is generally not considered a factor when planting, although it can produce 1- to 3-inch long tasty fruit.

Feijoa generally ripens during October and November in Louisiana. The green fruit falls to the ground when mature and can be collected from the ground daily and kept cool until ready to use. The fruit also can be manually harvested when the fruit releases from the stem when handled. Fruit that is very hard may need to be allowed to remain at room temperature a day or two to become fully ripe.

The fruit should be slightly soft when ripe. The jellied section in the interior of the fruit should be clear when ripe. Under-ripe fruit will have a half-white/half-clear jellied section. Over-ripe fruit will show signs of browning in the jellied section and be off flavor.

Ripe feijoas retain their best flavor only 2 or 3 days without refrigeration. The flavor deteriorates without any change in outward appearance of the

fruit. Fruit kept between 35 degrees and 50 degrees can be kept up to a month.

Most feijoa planted in the landscape are seedlings with generally small and lower quality fruit than named varieties. Coolidge is a self-fertile variety and is the most common named variety found. Mammoth, Nazemetz, Trask and Triumph are other varieties that are sometimes found. Most feijoa plants are self-sterile or partial self-sterile and should be grown with another variety or seedling if fruit is desired.

Persimmon

Two species of persimmons are often found in Louisiana. The common persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana*, is native to most of Louisiana. The roundish fruit is a ¾ to 1 ½ inch in diameter. The color of ripe fruit is yellow to orange or dark brownish red. There is often a delicate waxy white powdery coating on the fruit. The fruit is astringent or puckery until it becomes soft ripe in the fall. A frost will hasten the loss of astringency.

Common persimmons have male and female trees. A male tree is usually needed for pollination for fruit to be produced. Female trees seldom produce fruit without pollination. There are very few improved varieties of common persimmon and these are hard to find.

The Japanese or Oriental persimmon, *Diospyros kaki*, is the persimmon often seen planted in landscapes. It produces attractive orange to red peach-size fruit during the fall. Most commonly grown Japanese persimmons varieties produce seedless fruit without being pollinated. Pollinated fruit will have seeds. Common persimmons will not pollinate Japanese persimmons.

Persimmons are classified as either astringent or nonastringent. The fruit of an astringent variety must be jelly-soft ripe before it is edible, whereas, a nonastringent variety can be eaten crisp like an apple. Persimmons ripen from late September through December depending on the varieties. They will continue to ripen after they are picked off the tree.

Fuyu, Suruga and Hana Fuyu are nonastringent persimmons varieties recommended for Louisiana. Astringent varieties for Louisiana include Tanenashi and Hachiya.

John Pyzner

Vegetables to Plant September...

Beets, broccoli (transplants or seeds through September), brussels sprouts (transplants or seeds), cabbage (transplants or seeds), Chinese cabbage (transplants or seeds), cauliflower (transplants or seeds), collards (transplants or seeds), endive, carrots, English peas, snow peas, garlic (late September), kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onions (seeds, late September), parsley, snap beans (early September), radishes, rutabaga, shallots, spinach, Swiss chard, turnips and kale.

October...

Cabbage, broccoli (transplants), mustard,* turnips, collards, kale, parsley, shallots, radishes, beets, spinach,* leaf lettuce, Chinese cabbage,* celery, onions, Swiss chard, garlic, carrots, endive.*

November...

Beets,* shallots, garlic,* Swiss chard, spinach, kale, radish, mustard, carrots and turnips.

*Plant first part of the month.



Crop Highlights

Onions (bulbing): Onion seed may be planted for transplants from mid-September until late October. Keep the soil moist to help germination. Because seed coats are hard, it may take two weeks for onion seed to germinate to a stand. Onions can be transplanted in mid-December through January. Sow directly in the row where they are to mature in October to early November.

Several drills may be planted on one row. Leave 6 to 8 inches between drills. Pay special attention to weed control in direct-seeded onions. Control winter weeds before the onset of wet soils and cool weather. Consider planting onion plants in black plastic mulch. The mulch controls weeds, enhances growth and keeps the onion bulbs clean.

Short day varieties to plant are Red Creole C5 (red, pungent and stores well), Red Burgundy, Candy (golden), Texas Grano 1015Y (sweet yellow), Grano 502 (yellow), Granex 33 (sweet yellow), Superstar (white), Crystal Wax (white) and Sweet Vadalina.

Fertilize plants sparingly before planting. This will prevent excessive growth, which enhances premature seed stalk development or bolting. From 2 to 3 pounds of 0-20-20, 7-21-21 or 8-24-24 per 100 feet of row are sufficient. Sidedress onions just before bulbing next spring. Several nitrogen sidedressings at 2- to 3-week intervals increase plant size and bulb size. (Same schedule for bulbing shallots. Choose Prisma or Matador.)

Green Shallots: Shallot sets can be planted any time in fall or winter. Replant several as you harvest by separating plants and retransplanting. They'll continue to divide and make several more plants. By doing this, you can have shallots through spring. The largest shallot bulbs for sets are made by transplanting in mid November to December.

Garlic: Separate garlic bulbs into individual cloves before planting in October. Several varieties, like Silverskin, are available, but sets may be difficult to find. Tahiti, or elephant garlic, is the largest and mildest. The Italian and Creole varieties are smaller and stronger. Check the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Market Bulletin and the Internet (<http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/divisions/marketing/marketbulletin/on-line-issues.asp>) for possible sources of sets.

Plant cloves about 1 inch deep and 4 to 6 inches apart in the row. Several drills may be planted on one row. Allow 6 to 8 inches between drills. Fertilize before planting with 4 to 5 pounds of 8-24-24 per 100 feet

of row. Sidedress with nitrogen after garlic is up and again next February and March just before bulb swell.

Lettuce & Endive: September is the best month to plant lettuce. Head and semi-head lettuce should be planted so that it is harvested before a hard frost. Sidedress about 3 to 4 weeks after transplanting and again 2 to 3 weeks later. Good varieties are Parris Island Cos, Ithaca, Sierra, Nevada, Maverik, Salad Bowl, Red Sails and Buttercrunch. Cover lettuce seed only lightly for best germination.

Greens: Keep the soil moist. Avoid planting greens too thick. A 3- to 4-inch spacing between plants is recommended. For weed control, Treflan can be incorporated before planting. Double drills may be planted on one row, allowing 10 to 12 inches between drills.

Broccoli and Cauliflower: Direct-seed or transplant through September. Space cauliflower about 12 to 18 inches apart and broccoli 6 to 12 inches apart. Both shallow-rooted crops respond to fairly high rates of fertilizer, 4 to 6 pounds of 8-8-8 or 3 to 4 pounds of 8-24-24 per 100 feet of row. Sidedress with about a pint of ammonium nitrate per 100 feet of row about two to four weeks after transplanting. Two to three added sidedressings at 2-week intervals will increase yield.

Broccoli varieties recommended include Green Comet (A.A.S.), Packman, Premium Crop (A.A.S.), Arcadia and Patriot.

Recommended early cauliflower hybrids are Snow Crown (A.A.S.), Majestic, Cumberland and Incline. Candid Charm is a large-head, early hybrid that self wraps. Good open-pollinated varieties include White Rock and Self Blanch (fall only).

Cabbage: Recommended varieties for fall and winter production are Pacifica, Dynamo, Red Rookie, Super Red 80, Quisto, Stonehead and Rio Verde, Solid Blue 780, Blue Vantage, Cheers, Emblem, Vantage Point and Savoy types. A&C #5+ is the hardiest.

Chinese Cabbage: Chinese cabbage is an excellent crop for fall gardens. It may be used like lettuce. Seed may be planted in September. Solid heads form 55 to 60 days after seeding.

English Peas and Snow Peas: Plant English peas, snow peas and other peas with edible pods in September. The key to success is to plant early enough so they bloom before frost and late enough so they aren't blooming when temperatures are too high.

Plant peas about 1 to 2 inches apart in the row. From 2 to 4 ounces of seed will

plant a 100-foot row. From 70 to 80 days are required from planting until harvest. Staking or trellising peas, even the bush types, will help to increase the chance of success.

Spinach: For best growth, spinach requires a fertile, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0 to 7.0. Apply 4 to 5 pounds of a complete fertilizer per 100 feet of row about two weeks before planting. Sidedress with 1 pound of ammonium nitrate per 100 feet of row about one month after seeding. This will keep it growing quickly, making it tender and improving quality. An additional sidedressing after harvest will improve yields on second cuttings.

Plant seeds about 1/2 inch deep, and thin plants to 1 to 3 inches apart in the row. Since seeds are slow to germinate, be sure to keep soil moist. Double drills may be planted on one row; allow 8 to 12 inches between drills. Suggested varieties are Samish, Bloomsdale Long Standing, Melody, Tye, Skookum and Olympia.

Pumpkins and Winter Squash: Harvest pumpkins and winter squash after they have developed a hard rind and the appropriate color for their variety. If the rind cannot be easily penetrated by the thumbnail, the fruit is mature. Leave about 3 inches of stem

attached to the fruit. Stored in a cool, dry place (off the ground and floor if possible), these cucurbits will keep well for several months.

Sweet Potatoes: Dig sweet potatoes before a frost occurs. Cure potatoes after digging by storing at 85 degrees to 90 degrees and 85% to 90% humidity for a week. Cured potatoes will keep longer. After curing, hold potatoes at about 60 degrees in high humidity. Maximum sweetness is 6 to 7 weeks after harvest. Don't refrigerate. Dust potatoes kept for seed with 5% Imidan for weevil control.

Tomatoes: November is a good time to look through seed catalogs. All-American selections do well. Local seed growers are encouraged to handle new varieties but rarely do. Order before Christmas. Plant seed by early February.

Carrots: Direct-seed carrots from September on. Form high, well-drained rows 20 inches apart. Thin to about 2 inches apart. Choose Danvers 126, Apache, Navajo, Magnum, Reoleta or cello bunch.

Collards: For good collards plant Blue Max, Champion, Flash, Heavi-Crop, Top Bunch or Vates.

Jimmy Boudreaux, Tom Koske



Please contact your parish agent for additional information.

Turfgrass and Lawns

Hints for Fall Lawn Care

After mid-August, postpone any permanent turfgrass establishment from seed until spring. Solid sod or plug, overseed with ryegrass in mid-fall to check erosion.

For a green lawn all year, you'll have to sow ryegrass seed late September through early October (North Louisiana) or mid-October through early November (South Louisiana). Choose a perennial rye for a finer lawn that can withstand cold weather better. Most varieties or blends work well.

Two or three weeks after planting the seed, apply 8 to 12 pounds of a starter-type of fertilizer to each 1,000 square feet of area. Sow about 10 pounds (at least 5 pounds) of seed per 1,000 square feet of lawn, and drag or rake into sod. On coarse St. Augustine, sow the 10 pounds for better coverage. For best results, first mow existing lawns 1/2 inch shorter than usual before seeding. In winter use 3 pounds of ammonium nitrate per 1,000 square feet or a turf fertilizer blend equivalent. Use only as needed (about twice) to maintain desired growth and color.

If you will not be overseeding, be careful with fall fertilizing of warm-season grasses. In September or October, they may need a little extra potassium (about 1 or 2 pounds of muriate potash per 1,000 square feet) and little or no nitrogen at all.

Stimulating fall growth of our warm-season turf with nitrogen leads to extra disease and winterkill. If you need extra color on fall turf, apply foliar iron spray. Phosphorus is not needed at this time if you are not overseeding. Keep mowing and watering your lawn as needed in the fall. If lime was called for on your fall soil test results, apply it in mid- to late fall or winter.

If you haven't tested your soil in the past several years, do it now. To test your soil, bring in 1 pint of soil to your county agent's office. It should be a composite of soil plugs taken from several areas 4 inches deep and mixed together.

Brown patch disease can come and go all winter if weather is mild. A treatment of fungicide labeled for brown patch will check its spread. This is important for good spring green-up.

Tom Koske

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Horticulture Hints



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Parish agents, please adapt these suggestions to your
area before disseminating.

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