

What To Do in November

The average first frost date in our area is November 15.

Plant vegetable seeds. EARLY NOVEMBER: Mustard, Radish, Spinach

Plant vegetable plants. Lettuce, Mustard and other Greens, Peas, Spinach

Plant herb plants. Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, Parsley and all perennial herbs such as Chives and Oregano

Plant strawberries.

Plant annual flower/ornamental seeds. Sweet Alyssum, Calendula, Centaurea, Coreopsis, Delphinium, Larkspur, Linaria, Nemesis, Poppy, Snapdragon, Sweet Pea, Johnny Jump-Up (Viola)

Plant annual flower/ornamental plants. Dusty Miller, Flowering Kale and Cabbage, Nicotiana, Pansy, Snapdragon, Sweet Pea,

Plant perennial plants, trees, and shrubs. All of them!

Plant ground covers and borders.

Last chance to plant wildflower seeds!

Overseed lawn with winter rye. Use "perennial rye" for that thin-bladed, slower-growing green winter lawn. It is not really perennial in Texas; it will die in the spring when the weather warms up.

Plant cover crops on bare garden soil. Plant clovers, hairy vetch, Austrian winter peas, annual rye, or Elbon (cereal) rye, for example, to protect the soil from weed infestation, help prevent erosion, and to till in as organic matter before planting in the spring. Elbon rye should be tilled in before it gets a foot tall, or it will be too tough to till.

Plant bulbs. Here are just a few types of bulbs that can naturalize here:

Daffodils/Narcissus: "Carbineer," "Carlton," "Ceylon," "Delibes,"

"Earlicheer," "Fortune," "Grand Primo," "Ice Follies," "Mount Hood,"

"Paperwhites," "Rustom Pasha;" *Hyacinthus orientalis* var. *albulus*

(French-Roman hyacinth); *Ipheion uniflorum* (blue starflowers); *Lycoris*

squamigera (magic lily); *Leucojum aestivum* (summer snowflake); *Muscari*

neglectum (a.k.a. *M. racemosum* or *M. atlanticum*); *Zephyranthes candida*

(rain lily); and *Zephyranthes drummondii* (giant prairie lily)

Divide perennials. Transplant or give away your divisions of: daylily,

bearded iris, Shasta daisies, violets, wood ferns, and cannas.

Spray turf and landscape weekly with seaweed solution as a winterizer.

Prune out dead limbs from trees and shrubs before the leaves fall.

Prune back chrysanthemums almost to the ground after blooming.

Get ready to protect newly planted plants, tender vegetables and other tender plants before a freeze. Inspect and clean up potted plants that are moved indoors. Control insect pests on the plant or in the soil with an organic solution. Mulch all plants, including trees and shrubs. Water plants well before a freeze. Freeze damage occurs when ice crystals form inside plant cells and pierce the cell walls. A turgid plant cell (plump with water) is less likely to be ruptured by the ice crystals than flaccid cells. Drape row cover--a lightweight, spun fiber cloth--over susceptible plants in advance of a freeze, securing the fabric well at the soil line. Sheets or blankets are used the same way, and are better than plastic for draping. However, there are other low-cost structures that are easy to find or make for frost protection. Plastic cloches are an inexpensive alternative to the old glass cloches for covering individual plants. Five-gallon plastic water jugs can be used in the same way. Simply cut off the base of the jug, seal the top opening with foil, etc., and place over individual plants. A homemade cold frame can cover several plants at once, and can be custom-sized. Using 1"x 2" wood, make the framework for the four walls of your plant "house." One wall should be taller than its opposite wall, so that you'll have an angled roof. Cut and staple 6 mil clear plastic to the frame to make the walls. Then make the frame and plastic for the roof separately. This structure can easily be placed over tender plants, and the roof simply removed when the freeze ends. An easy way to protect a whole row of plants is to make a "hoop house." Starting at the end of the row, first place rebar (or a very strong stick) into the soil at the edge of the bed, and another one opposite it on the other side of the row. The rebar should have eight to ten inches in the ground, and six to eight inches above the ground. Continue placing these pairs of rebar opposite each other every three feet or so along the edges of the bed. Then cut 1/2" - 3/4" diameter thin-walled PVC pipe in lengths to make hoops spanning from each stick to its mate across the row. Finally, the whole line of hoops can be covered with plastic, or a single or double

layer of row cover, and clamped to the hoops with spring clamps. Be sure to make the hoops tall enough so that the plants do not touch the plastic or fabric.

(Thanks to Howard Garrett's Texas Organic Gardening Book, the Travis County Master Gardener Association's Garden Guide for Austin and Vicinity, and the staff of the Natural Gardener for some of this month's tips.)