

## What To Do in October

Plant vegetable seeds. Beets, Carrot, Mustard, Onion, Garden Pea, Radishes, Spinach, Turnip. EARLY OCTOBER: Chinese Cabbage, Collards, Garlic, Lettuce

Plant vegetable plants. Chinese Cabbage, Collards (and other Greens), Lettuce, Spinach, Turnip, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Chinese Greens, Lettuce, and Spinach can be planted throughout the fall, if they are given frost protection.

Plant herbs. Plants: All perennial herb plants; also Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, Parsley. Seeds: Borage, Caraway, Chamomile, Chervil, Chives, Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, Parsley, Summer Savory

Plant annual flower/ornamental seeds. Sweet Alyssum, Calendula, Centaurea, Coreopsis, Johnny Jump-Up, Larkspur, Nasturtium, Pansy, Poppy, Snapdragon, Sweet Pea

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Plant perennials, trees, and shrubs. Plant Columbine (in a shady location) now in order to have those springtime blooms.

Plant ground covers and borders.

Plant strawberries. Create a nice, rich planting bed for them by mixing in compost and organic fertilizer.

Plant wildflower seeds! They love full sun! This month is the ideal time to plant them. Try to find Bluebonnet inoculant to go with your Bluebonnet seeds. It is in the bean family, after all, and would like some of that Rhizobium bacteria.

Divide perennials. Transplant or give away your divisions of: daylily, bearded iris, Shasta daisies, violets, wood ferns, and cannas.

Start, or add to, a compost pile.

Be on the lookout for Brown Patch in the (usually St. Augustine) lawn. Treat brown patch by increasing the beneficial soil life. Topdress with good quality manure compost and/or spray lawn with aerobically brewed compost tea. Add corn meal at 20 pounds per 1000 square feet. Apply Actinovate at one pound per 1000 square feet of problem area. Also address the causal factors by filling in low spots, mowing at the proper height, and watering properly.

Plant cover crops. Plant clovers, hairy vetch, Austrian winter peas, or annual rye instead of mulching, and till them in next spring before they flower. Elbon (cereal) rye is a cover crop that can assist in controlling the root-knot nematode in the soil. If you plant elbon rye, it should be cut and tilled in before it gets to be a foot tall. For all cover crops, wait at least a couple of weeks after tilling before you plant anything else, to allow the organic matter to decompose.

Overseed lawn with perennial rye. This grass is actually annual in Texas, meaning that it will die back when the spring gets hot. Perennial rye has a thin blade, establishes quickly but grows slowly, and is usually the choice for overseeding lawns, as compared to annual rye. Avoid letting either rye go to seed, or else you'll be seeing it sprout again next fall where you might not want it.

Purchase (but don't plant yet) spring-blooming bulbs. Often, now is when these flower bulbs are available in the nursery. However, planting them now could cause them to start sprouting during a fall warm spell, only to be frozen back the next day, losing the bloom for next spring. It's better to plant them in November, when we - on average - begin to get more consistently cool temperatures. Put the non-naturalizing bulbs, like the classic Dutch tulip and Hyacinth, for example, in the refrigerator now for planting or for forcing. Our winters are not cold enough nor long enough for these bulbs to bloom properly here, so we must supplement their winter cold period. Bulbs require a particular cold spell, like fruit trees, in order to form their flower bud. Here are just a few types of bulbs that can naturalize here:

fodils/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). For more information, consult *Garden Bulbs for the South*, by Scott Ogden, from which this information is taken.

Spray lawn and landscape weekly with seaweed spray. Seaweed's potassium, along with other minerals and hormones, makes it the perfect anti-freeze for all plants. Other benefits include increased disease and pest resistance and promotion of flowering. Spray in the early morning or in the evening so that the leaves' stomata will absorb the seaweed readily

(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.)