

WHAT ARE OUR STAR GARDENERS DOING IN OCT?



Janet Schulz: This picture was taken from my window. Because of the rain it shows two of my favorite fall plants. The yellow is Rudbeckia nitida "Herbstsonne". Grows at least 6 ft. And the birds love the seed heads. The orange is another 5-6 footer but an annual called Tithonia or Mexican Sunflower. You need to grow your own seeds of this because I have not found a local grower. They just keep on blooming for the longest time and grow together to compliment each other so well.



Time to bring in any tender plants you want to keep for the winter. Pictured above are just a few of my many begonias. Note in the background the glass container with paper whites started. Now is the time to get your bulbs that will bloom this winter or next spring to start. I'll tell you more about bulbs at our next meeting when I give my bulb talk.

Marina Kunkera:

Would you believe this beautiful and fragrant Angel Trumpet plant came from a branch Sharon gave me and I overwintered?!

The wild population of Brugmansia (angel's trumpet) has been considered as threatened in the IUCN Red List since 2014. This species is extinct in the wild. The last wild individual was dead in Brazil. It is known only by living members kept in captivity, or as a naturalized population outside its historic range due to massive habitat loss.

For the tips of the month:

Last chance to take cuttings of the plants (annuals and perennials) you want to propagate for next year's garden.



Tender houseplants should be in your home already. I have many plants in outdoor pots or in the ground which I transplant into indoor pots and I'm ready to bring them indoors just before the first frost. October 15th is approximately the frost date in our area.

Dahlias and canna plants must stay in the ground or outdoor pots until after the first frost. I usually wait a few days after the first frost before I cut off the stocks down to about 6". The cannas I overwinter in pots, in my garage. Dahlia tubers can either be overwintered in pots in a garage, or the Dahlia tubers should be washed and stored in a cool, dry, dark place - cardboard boxes, styrofoam boxes, etc (in peat moss or pine shavings).

I am cutting off and cleaning up all Hosta leaves, astilbes and spent tender perennials and putting the waste in my compost. I am leaving my fall blooming plants such as asters, mums, Montauk daisies, etc. I am pulling out all my annual plants and placing them in compost, too.

I enjoy burning small sticks and branches in my chiminea at the end of a busy gardening day.



Paul Sisko:

Dear Garden Friends,

From October through December the biggest activity in the Garden is to be PRUNING. You will either be pruning in stages of 1/3 at a time each month or possibly full pruning within inches of the ground depending on the shrub. Either way, your tools should be in really good condition to do this chore. First and foremost the tools should be SHARP. (If you don't know how to sharpen them PLEASE MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME AND I WILL SHARPEN THEM AND TEACH YOU HOW TO MAINTAIN THE SHARPNESS.) If you are unsure how much to prune PLEASE go online and Google the question.



There are tons of informational sites to guide you. Some tell you how to just do seasonal pruning and others how to severely reshape your plant.

In a short time you will also be pulling out any annuals that have given you pleasure all season long. Shake off as much soil as possible and level out the hole. Move any mulch from the surrounding area to smooth out the area. Just because the garden is being put to sleep does not mean it can't look neat. Rake out any leaves and debris that are under and around the perennial shrubs that will stay there all winter. From time to time between pruning plants, clean your pruner with either hand sanitizer on a throwaway paper towel or spray them with a solution of 10% alcohol to 90% water or a bit stronger.

October is a great time to plant new perennials or move them if they have outgrown their space. This includes grasses that have gotten too wide over the years. First I put a thin rope around the grasses and tighten it up as much as I can and tie it off. Use a hedge trimmer to cut the grasses down to within 3 - 4 inches of the ground. The rope makes it easy to get rid of the grass clump in one nice bundle. Next I use a SAWZALL if you have one. I saw around the clump or part of the clump with a 12 inch blade to get below the roots. I then saw the clump in quarters and dig the sections out and replant them in a previously dug hole, backfill and water. This gives the roots a chance to acclimate to its new surroundings while the soil is still warm.

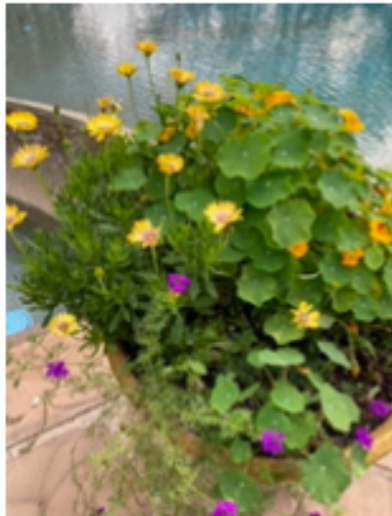
Pruning Tree Branches is a whole other subject. Either look it up online or contact me for further information.

Happy Pruning this Fall.

Paul

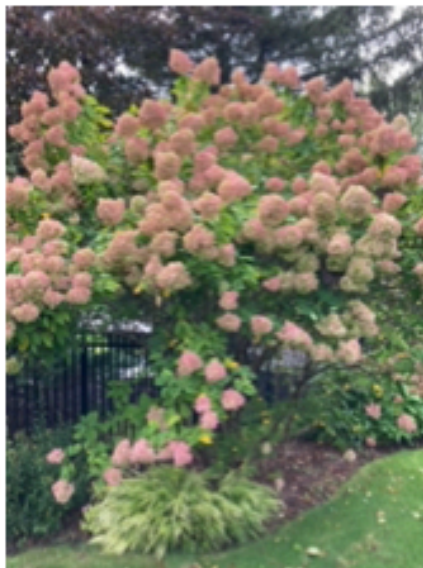
Nancy Blasius: These are some pictures of what is making me smile in my garden right now.

The first is my beautyberry bush, which will look even cooler when the leaves drop off and the berries remain.



The others are my pots which have flourished in the rain and cooler weather, after surviving July's heat. I love Osteospermum in pots because after it's spring blooming (and deadheading) it reblooms in fall even better than at first.

Persian Shield does well in all weather extremes too.



To have continuous nasturtiums, who like it cool, I stick some seeds around the perimeter of my pots in April, collect the seeds as they form, and reseed in July for my Fall blooming. My favorite "spiller" is the lime green "lemon licorice " Helichrysum.

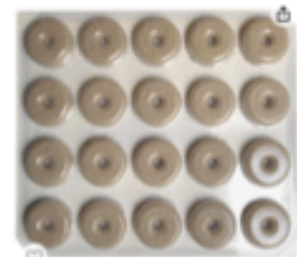
And I had to include my hydrangea "tree" which started out in shades of white and pale green in July and has gradually morphed into its glorious pinks.

Sharon Ma: If you are gonna bring in tender plants indoors for the winter months, cleaning them before bringing in will help you cut down pest infestations later.

Start by preparing a big bucket or a pan and fill it with a homemade insecticidal soap solution (2.5 tablespoons of castile soap +2.5 tablespoons of vegetable oil per 1 gal of water). Make as much as you will need to fill the container.

Then submerge the whole plant into the solution for 5-15 mins. Use the solution to wash any foliage that is above the solution level thoroughly. Remove and let dry, then bring inside as soon as possible so no new pests come to contact the plant. This procedure will cut down many pests' existence on your plants, such as aphids, whiteflies, mealybugs and scales. From time to time, you may still find small amounts of mealybugs and scales which you can clean them with a cotton swab dipped in alcohol.

To control fungus gnats, the first rule is to let the top 1-2" soil total dry up before watering the plant. But if you still have fungus gnats around, you may use mosquito dunk to soak in the water before watering the plants. It is a natural bacteria that attacks larvae, so it will keep the fungus gnat larvae down.



Visit the Gideal Store 4.1 ★★★★★ 14,215
Gideal 20-Pack Dual-Sided Yellow Sticky Traps for Flying Plant Insect Such as Fungus Gnats, Whiteflies, Aphids, Leafminers, Thrips - (6x8 Inches, Included 20pcs Twist Ties)



I use a yellow sticker sheet to catch any adults that are flying around the plants that I don't see.

Brand: Hweyho 4.8 ★★★★★ 2,895
Bug Zapper, 2023 Upgraded Bug Zapper, 2 in 1 Mosquito Zapper, Powerful Mosquito Trap, Fly Zapper Indoor with Purple Lights Fly Killer for Home, Garden, Patio



I use insect spray to kill any flying insects that I encounter around my plants. They are organic and safe to humans and pets. But I will be careful not to spray directly on plants. I sometimes spray the top of the soil if I see any fungus gnat activities on top of the soil.

Brand: STEM 4.8 ★★★★★ 366
STEM Kills Flies, Mosquitoes And Gnats Plant-Safe Active Ingredient Bug Spray, Natural Insecticide for Indoor and Outdoor Use, 10.5 oz (Pack of 3)



One more gadget that I tested and very happy with is a flying insect trap. It is very quiet and no chemicals are used.

I buy all of the above on Amazon.