

# Horticulture

## Garden Cleanup

Now that the end of the growing season is near, it is time to do the garden cleanup work. While this chore may seem like busy-work to some, it is important to mention the disease and insect prevention purpose of this task. The hours and labor spent now may be more than paid back by fewer problems in the next growing season.

The garden cleanup really has four parts: complete removal of old garden plants that have had disease or insects, searching for and removal of all rotten or diseased fruits that may have fallen, turning back into the soil all crop residue from plants that have been harvested but did not die from diseases or pests, and mixing all organic mulches from garden areas where it is no

longer needed. Trellises and stakes that are no longer needed can be taken out, cleaned and stored for next year.

Some gardeners may leave this cleanup for the whole garden until the last fall vegetable has been harvested or worse yet, until just before next spring's planting. It is a good idea to clean up each garden area when it is finished even though other parts of the garden are still producing fall crops.

Crop residues from healthy plants are a valuable source of organic matter, which most of our soils need. This term is used for all portions of plants left over after harvest: stems, stubble, mulch and root residues. These materials can be cut up and put on your compost pile. (MJF)

## Storing Vegetables

After a successful garden season, you may have vegetables you would like to store until you are ready to use them. Here are suggestions to help you store your vegetables properly.

**Carrots:** Trim carrot tops to one inch. Layer unwashed carrots in a container of moist sand. Carrots can be stored in a cool place, 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 4-5 months.

**Onions:** Store cured onions in a dry location at 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Potatoes:** Cure fresh dug potatoes 1 to 2 weeks in a dark, dry location at 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Store cured potatoes in a dark location at 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 5 to 6 months.

**Sweet potatoes:** Cure fresh dug sweet potatoes at 80 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 days. Store cured sweet potatoes in a dry, dark location at 55 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit for 4 to 6 months.

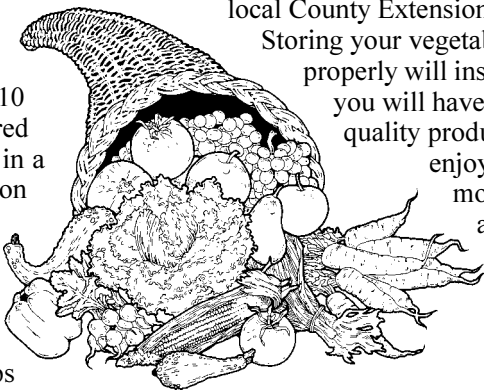
**Turnips:** Trim turnip tops

to one inch. Layer unwashed turnips in a container of moist sand. Turnips can be stored in a cool place, 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit for 4 to 5 months.

**Winter squash:** Cure vine ripen winter squash for 10 days at 80 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit and high humidity. Store mature, cured winter squash in a dry location at 55 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 to 6 months. Acorn squash will keep well in a dry place at 45 degrees Fahrenheit for 35 to 40 days. Do not cure acorn squashes before storing them.

For more information about storing other vegetables or fruits, please refer to NebGuide: Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (G95-1264). This publication is available at your local County Extension Office.

Storing your vegetables properly will insure that you will have good quality produce to enjoy in the months ahead. (MJF)



## Perennials with Silver Foliage

Silver or gray is an interesting color in the landscape. Similar to white, silver has the ability to soothe and blend with other colors. Yet unlike white, metallic colors often contrast or stand out in green landscapes. Visualize how Colorado blue spruce (Picea) or dusty miller (Cineraria) shine in their surroundings. There are many perennials that have the same ability to sparkle in your garden. As an added benefit, many silver foliage plants prefer full sun with dry soils making them excellent summer tolerant performers in the garden.

**Lamb's ear** (Stachys byzantina) is one of the most recognizable of silver foliage perennials. The whitish hairs that cover each leaf give the plant a soft covering and gray appearance. This perennial groundcover is grown primarily for its foliage. The cultivar 'Silver Carpet' is noted for its consistent silver coloring, low-growing habit and lack of flowers.

Another group of perennials that are grown primarily for foliage are the artemisias. **White sage** (Artemisia ludoviciana) grows to 3 feet tall and often

spreads quickly in the garden. The woolly gray foliage on long stems dries well and is often used in flower arrangements. In contrast, **silver mound artemisia** (Artemisia schmidtiana) grows 15 inches tall and remains in clumps. Its foliage is finely dissected and delicate in comparison to white sage. Both artemisias flower in late summer, but the whitish-yellow flowers are often of little consequence.

The lavender-blue flowers on **Russian sage** (Perovskia atriplicifolia) are one of its most ornamental features. In late summer the flowers compliment the gray, aromatic foliage. Plants grow 4 feet tall and 3 feet wide. If allowed to remain, the silvery stems and leaves will stand in the garden through much of the winter.

Another groundcover perennial with metallic foliage is **snow-in-summer** (Cerastium tomentosum). This 6 to 8 inch tall plant has bright, white flowers that cover the small silvery leaves in May. Snow-in-summer is ideally suited for pockets in rock walls or other dry sites. However, it is not tolerant of long periods of summer heat and humidity.



Snow-in-Summer

A biennial with silver foliage is **rose campion** (Lychnis coronaria). Rose campion has showy rose, white, or red flowers that contrast with the silver-green leaves. Flowers are produced profusely in summer on open, airy plants that are 2 to 3 feet tall. Plants often reseed assuring their place in the garden for several years.

Other sun-loving perennials with silver foliage include: **yarrow** (Achillea 'Coronation Gold'), **butterfly bush** (Buddleia davidiana) and **wooly thyme** (Thymus). In addition, there are shade-loving perennials with silver foliage markings. They are **lungworts** (Pulmonaria saccharata) and **yellow archangle** (Galeobdolon luteum). (MJF)

## House Plant Insect Problems

If you have house plants, at some time you will have a problem with insects. The most common house plant insects are aphids, white flies, mealy bugs, thrips, scale and spider mites.

Some of these insects are so small it is difficult to see them, but most can be seen without the use of a hand lens.

Fortunately most of the insects are easily controlled with insecticides. Instructions for using these insecticides will be on the label. Following these instructions carefully is important to avoid damaging your plants.

Insect damage to plants takes on various appearances.

Color changes in the leaves often indicate the presence of insects. If leaves curl, dry and die, check for possible insect infestations.

Isolate new plants to be certain they are not bringing new insects into your house. Inspect your plants regularly to keep ahead of any potential insect problems. (MJF)

## 2002 October/November Garden Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Plant garlic	2 Pick squash and pumpkins before frost	3 Water trees and shrubs	4 Pick green tomatoes to ripen indoors	5 Winterize sprinkler system
6	7 Pick last apple and pears	8 Drain water hoses and store before frost	9 Plant spring flowering bulbs	10 Average date of first frost	11 Lower mower height to 2-2.5 inches	12
13	14 Clean up garden	15	16 Rake and compost leaves	17	18 Fertilize tall fescue	19 Fertilize bluegrass lawn
20	21	22 Organize garden supplies and tools	23	24 Clean up perennial flower beds	25	26 Plant acorns to start new oak trees
27	28 Put up bird feeders	29	30 Continue to mow lawn as needed	31 Make wish list for next year	1 Store chemicals in frost free location	2 Water newly planted bulbs
3	4 Clean up fallen fruit	5	6 Check stored fruits and vegetables for rot	7	8 Shred leaves for mulch	9 Turn compost pile
10	11	12 Mulch perennial plants	13 Finish garden clean up	14 Water trees and shrubs before ground freezes	15	16
17	18 Clean and repair garden tools	19	20 Pick bag worms from evergreens	21 Mulch strawberry plants	22	23 Prune and mulch roses
24	25	26 Check house plants for insects	27 Check stored bulbs and tubers for rot	28	29 Shop for your favorite gardener	30 Choose a live Christmas tree

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MJF)

### Horticulture information center

NUFACTS  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
1-800-832-5441; or  
441-7188 in the Lincoln area

To listen to a NUFACTS information center message, call the number above on a touch-tone phone, then enter a three-digit number listed below. Call 441-7180 to receive a brochure with all the NUFACTS message topics.

- NUFACTS
- 122 Fall Watering
- 143 What to do with Leaves
- 157 Winter Rose Care
- 236 Strawberry Winter Care
- 241 Fruit Storage
- 271 Drying Gourds

