

THE GARDEN PATCH



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Salt Lake Master Gardener Association

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It's Time for Fall Garden Tasks

By Kathy Lillywhite

To a gardener it seems the “to do list” is long and time is short with fewer daylight hours ahead. Even to an experienced gardener the fall garden chores can be overwhelming. But a garden can be a year-round pleasure if we plan for it. As the days get cooler many plants put forth their best and last flush of blooms so it becomes difficult to uproot and divide plants that need to be disturbed. Planning ahead and doing those fall garden tasks will make a better garden for next year. The following are some suggested garden tasks to be done during September and October.

Add fall blooming perennials and cool season annuals to your garden. You can currently find in most garden centers an array of very interesting garden mums that can be added to the garden as perennials or temporarily as annuals for immediate color. Other long lasting falls blooms are pansies, viola ‘Penny’, kale and cabbages, aster ‘Purple Dome’, miniature colorful peppers, and turtlehead (chelone). If you need to plant ground cover, this is an excellent time to get it started. I’m presently intrigued with Corsican mint z. 6-9 (*menthe requienii*) and baby tears z. 10-11 (*Soleiruba soleirolli*) for mat-forming, shady areas. These are plants that “fill in the cracks”. I love both of the plants and they have wintered over in my garden with snow cover just fine!

Plant spring-flowering bulbs. For me, this process lasts until the ground freezes over. I love the unusual bulbs - alliums, fritillaries, and artist’s tulips. Spring bulbs are always a welcoming sight after a dreary winter and will begin their blooms as early as February. Preparations for a beautiful spring garden start with fall plans. To get the most energy from blooms of bulbs, be sure to plant in drifts of a dozen or more.

Hold back on water and fertilizer. A rule of thumb some gardeners go by is no fertilizer after Labor Day. Help plants harden off for winter days ahead. Slowing the water flow is necessary to shut the plants down as well as discontinue the growth-stimulating fertilizer.

Plant and transplant perennials. Early fall is the best time to move or divide perennials such as peonies, oriental poppies, fern, dicentra, and geraniums. There are many more good weeks for the plants to get their roots established before frost and cold weather hits. Early spring blooming perennials will do better if transplanted, divided, or moved after their spring bloom.

Plant trees and shrubs. Trees and shrubs will adjust better because of the cool weather and less demand on the root system for transporting water to the leaves. The plants can use their energy to establish the root system and prepare for next spring’s leaf growth. Some less-planted trees that have excellent fall color are Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboretum*), and White Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*). Some other shrubs with great fall color are Fothergilla, Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), and Dwarf Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*).

Try something new. This year I am planting new hellebores for winter blooms. I have enjoyed their large tropical-looking leaves and undemanding ways throughout my garden all year long. There are many new varieties that I will be trying, such as picotees and double blooms. Also, heaths and heathers are a hardy lot. I’ve seen these plants blooming in neglected landscapes. Some of the European species will tolerate alkaline soil and, once established, can be very drought tolerant. I have several places in mind for this low growing shrubby but colorful ground cover. Gardening this fall could be the most enjoyable time of the year.



On Kay Packard

I was born in Paul, Idaho and later moved to Ogden, UT. During my public school years in Ogden, my parents had a vegetable garden each year. I remember working beside my father in the garden and loved eating the fresh tomatoes while sitting on the ground beside the tomato plants.

I learned about Master Gardeners from my sister, Susan, who lived in Boise, Idaho. As I planned my retirement from the University of Utah, it seemed natural to channel my energy into becoming a Master Gardener. On Dec. 10, 1998, I received my Master Gardener certificate. I am a lifelong learner and acknowledge that I have much to learn about gardening. Therefore, maybe any of the following definitions from the Oxford Dictionary would be more appropriate descriptions of me that "Master" gardener:

Amateur: 1. One who loves, is fond of, or has a taste for anything. 2. One who cultivates anything as a pastime, hence a dabbler.

Dabble: 1. "to wet by splashing; to besplatter, besprinkle, bedabble"

Dabbler: 1. One of dabbles, ie. "to work off and on at something."

I am happy as a clam when the weather is pleasant and I can putter in our yard. Similar to other gardeners, I think bindweed is a pain. However, I'd rather be outside battling bindweed than inside housecleaning. It is accurate that deadheading flowers is time consuming and laborious, but it brings me outside where I can soak up the sun, feel productive, and observe the beauty of nature.

During my university work with students exploring various careers, I learned that artistic people learn and rejuvenate while in contact with other artistic people. I think that Master Gardeners are artistic people.

I value and learn from my contacts with other gardeners, and I am grateful that we have an active Master Gardener Association in Salt Lake County. During my Master Gardener training, I was fortunate to be the class representative on the Association board. While attending the monthly board meetings, I had personal contact and became acquainted with many Master Gardeners whom I now consider my coaches, mentors, and close friends. I like the sense of personal involvement these contacts bring to me. The following are two (out of a myriad) examples of the way some Master Gardeners have influenced me.

Before my Master Gardener training, I never even thought about collecting seeds from flowers that I admired. I have started a 4 x 6 file with seeds I've collected from various places in my own yard, my hair stylist's bouquets, and

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MANTIS WATCH: Eggcases and Reflections

By Catherine New

In October 2002 when I showed by long-time gardener neighbor the praying mantis egg case attached to the top of a three-foot yarrow stem in our arid north parkstrip, she exclaimed with dismay over having discarded just such an eggcase, having mistaken it for a wasp nest on a stem of tansy. My neighbor's dismay prompted speculation about the number of praying mantis eggcases inadvertently discarded in gardeners' routine fall cleanup. That speculation led to reflection on the value of the praying mantis in our outdoor environments, value as a beneficial predator of insect pests we strive to control, and more importantly - value as enrichment to our children's early learning experiences in science.

Whether you nurture a praying mantis habitat this season or are perhaps considering a praying mantis habitat next year, or even if this series has simply piqued your curiosity, visit the library to read Backyard Hunter: **The Praying Mantis** by Biana Lavies (E.P. Dutton, 1990.) This engaging book will be enjoyed and appreciated by backyard scientists of all ages whose summer out-of-doors is enriched by the praying mantis' presence. Lavies sets forth the praying mantis life cycle with vivid photos, clear text, and an affectionate dedication, "To Donna: I photographed this book especially for you, because you liked them as a child."

For Lavies' Donna, for my childhood self, and for the children in our community, the praying mantis extends as irresistible invitation to practice scientific observation and investigation. Children are natural scientists; I propose we expand and maintain neighborhood entomology laboratories: praying mantis habitats.

PRECIOUS FALL BAGS OF LEAVES

By Val Chatwin

It is fall! The leaves will turn red, yellow, and all shades in between, to paint up the sides of the hills and line the streets with awe-inspiring colors that make you stop and marvel at the display. I love the popular *Pyrus calleryana*, ornamental pears that line many streets, the red color is spectacularly amazing.

However, when the leaves fall on the Kentucky Blue grass lawn they have to be raked so they don't smother the grass. Sweated homeowners go out, with their children to help if they are lucky, and rake them into bags. Salt Lake City even provides orange bags to put them in to transport to the mulch piles at the land fill.

Now gardeners know that these leaves are quite precious and rake them onto the vegetable gardens or into their mulching piles or containers. Golden Reeves tells us each year how he gathers them up from the curbside in Salt Lake and takes them home.

before I joined Master Gardeners, my own trees for my vegetable edge of the street and covet them. tion wagon with some bags of borhood, I happened to be wearing such a strange

thing. I hurried and filled the car house where a homeowner might filching something, so I hurried to wagon was so full I couldn't see out of the rear view mirror but I got them home without causing an accident and spread them out on my garden, and tiled them in. [I know, real gardeners have mulch piles, but I don't.]

The next fall I was braver and didn't feel like a thief but like a composter, but I still hurried through the job. Once a lady I work with told me she had raked her yard and had a whole lot of bags and asked if I wanted them. I said "yes", with alacrity and went and got them.

Last fall, after hearing the master gardeners talk, I wanted as many bags of leaves as I could get. I was downtown in Salt Lake and all the orange sacks were lying on the curbside. I have usually driven up to the Avenues but I saw some bags sitting along 4th South, the trees above them looked like a good kind so I stopped and filled the car. When I got home I removed them and my mind momentarily registers a question when one bag made a clunking sound, but I ignored the thought. On another day I picked up another carload on about 1st West and 1st. North.

In a few days I carried the bags up to the garden and started emptying the first batch. Out fell Styrofoam cups, beef stick wrappers, a Marlboro cigarette package, a bus schedule for UTA #43, Bluffdale and Redwood Rd., electrical wire, black plastic electrical tape, a plastic container for some kind of pills, a pine tree shaped air freshener that you hang on the mirror of a car, an empty #303 size can of green beans, Prego spaghetti bottle, and a whole bunch of other stuff. There were leaves but they had also put their garbage in it! Well, I tried to sort out the garbage but when I would till little things would turn up like cigarette butts.

That was bad but the other bags proved to be worse. I had a little question when I was stuffing them into my car and they were prickly but I just ignored the caution. But when I dumped the first couple out I discovered the home owner had been pruning his roses and *Pyracantha* hedge. There were little sticks, with thorns, in the leaves. I threw the rest of the sacks in the trashcan and thought, "Well, maybe they will till in okay anyway, and by spring not be prickly". That was a big mistake! I garden barefooted and I have found from pruning my own rose bushes that every thorn that escaped onto the ground, I will step on in the summer. So all summer long I have been finding those stickers, the painful way. How long does it take rose thorns to biodegrade?

Anyway, be careful when you pile those innocent looking orange bags into your truck, trailer or car! I am still going up to get some more leaves but I will choose a better area and I will open the sacks and look inside first.



What a busy September this has been! With the State Fair, all of the work projects, and the harvest in full swing at home, it has been hard to keep up.

The peaches have ripened and I was able to dry most of them. The top part of the tree ripened first and it was easy to leave them on the tree until I had time to process them. This is the first year I have dried most of them. They are sure good to snack on. The prunes came on early this year. I found the leaves falling and some of the fruit also. The taste of the fruit was still tart but was starting to sweeten up. I dried some of the fallen fruits. They looked good, but the drying process did not improve them. I have a prune tree at my rental property which produced really good fruit. I was able to pick about fourteen gallons. With the two dryers I have, I can dry about five gallons at a time. Eighteen hours is enough time to dry them yet leave them soft enough not to rip your gums out.

Does September 14, 2003 mean anything to the gardeners in the Salt Lake area? The weather man indicated frost in the higher valleys; I did not know that meant frost in my back yard. It turned the squash leaves black along with the basil and some tomato plants. There is a low spot in my garden area that is prone to early frost. It was not a hard frost but enough to let me know that fall is on its way.

My 'El Star' and 'Royal Gala' apples have all been harvested already. It is nice to have a few limbs grafted to get the early fall fruit to eat. It sure beats the price of apples in the store. They ripen up in late August and early September. The 'Golden Delicious' and 'Granny Smith' apples will not be ready for a few more weeks, but I do have a good crop again this year. I try to pick the 'Granny Smith' apples as late as I can. Even a little frost will not hurt them.

I was able to turn off the watering time for a week with the rains in early September. I had fertilized the lawns in the middle of August and with the rain I had to cut the lawn more often. I want to let it grow long so I can spray the morning glory. I have been trying to eradicate it for a number of years.

The garlic I harvested in late July



By Wm. Golden Reeves

has gained full flavor. Now I just need to get next year's crop planted. A fellow who plants a lot of garlic indicates you only plant the outside cloves. This will grow larger bulbs and give you a better crop next year.

My tomato crop was a little disappointing this year. I planted tomatoes that others had recommended, but they all turned out to be the smaller variety. The heat took out some of my large tomatoes. The 'Sweet Chelsea', a cherry tomato, performed well as did the 'Barbara', a 'Roma' variety. I am considering changing the direction of my beds in the garden. They now run east and west, but north and south will give me much better coverage from the sun. The plants on the north side have grown much better. On the south side they get the sun all day with no relief.

Cooler weather has come. It is garden cleaning time. Enjoy the harvest!

Roasted Zucchini with Thyme

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Cut 3 zucchini into 1 1/2 inch chunks. Thinly slice 1 onion. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss zucchini and onion with 2 T. olive oil, 1 tsp. thyme, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/8 tsp. pepper. Roast 30 minutes, tossing halfway through.

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from the yards of friends and neighbors. I brought both seeds and plants to the spring plant exchange for the first time in 2002. I think Sherm Brough was the first Master Gardener I noticed bringing labeled seeds to the exchange. Thanks, Sherm, for your positive influence in many ways.

Bev and Don Sudbury have influenced me in many ways also, starting when they taught the Perennial and Annual Flower class during my Master Gardener training. I had never met anyone who knew as many details about flowers. Some orange daylilies were planted in our yard by previous owners, but until attending Bev and Don's presentation, I had not even been motivated to learn what type of daylilies they were or that their Latin name is *Hemerocallis*. I now know that our first daylilies were Tiger Lilies, and I want to learn accurate names for the other daylilies I have planted. Thanks, Bev and Don, for your positive influences!

Snake in the Garden

By Amy Hargreaves Judzis

Every once in a while, I host "The Ladies' Luncheon" for half-a-dozen of the neighborhood women whom I like. Last time, one of the ladies told the story of a rattlesnake getting into her back yard. She called her husband, he came home from work and dispatched it with an ax. Not to be outdone, I related a story of my adventures in community gardening.

Back in North Carolina, my formative gardening years were spent working a plot in a community garden. It was out in the middle of nowhere, a clearing cut into a forested area accessed by a rutted dirt road. The only water was a creek at one side of the gardens. For \$25 a summer, you could get a nice 25 by 50 foot plot to put to whatever use you wanted. Oh, did I have fun. I got every seed catalogue known to man, not just the mundane Burpee and Parks, but the exotic Thompson and Morgan, and Gleckler's Seedsmen of Metamora, Ohio (my favorite yearly photo in that one was of a "sweet six-year-old" girl holding a carrot that was bigger than she was.) I planted anything that struck my fancy and, in North Carolina, a whole lot of it grew.

Summers get hot and dry even in the humid southeast, though, so I kept a plastic, two-gallon can out at the garden for watering. This was in the days before I owned a car and darned if I was going to haul my can a couple of miles on my bike every time I went out to garden. I'd pick any bugs I could catch off my plants, then I'd walk down to the creek, throw the bugs to the fish and dip up some water.

One sunny summer day, I was sauntering down to the creek with my can stuffed with Japanese beetles. I was wearing flip-flops. I walked around a curve in the path and came face to face with one great big copperhead snake. I startled him as badly as he startled me. He hissed ferociously and struck at me. I, in my flip-flops, let loose with a yell that would have brought the cavalry had there been anyone out at the gardens but me, danced back and started swinging my watering can.

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! I beat the beejebers out of that snake. Japanese beetle flew thither and yon with every whack and my watering can started to split. The snake, realizing he'd taken on somebody bigger, uglier and considerably

meaner than he was, slithered as fast as he could into the underbrush and I hightailed it in the opposite direction.

I decided the garden didn't *really* need watering that day (besides which my can wouldn't hold water anymore), hopped on my bike and headed home, picking a last few Japanese beetles out of my hair. Never did wear flip-flops to the garden again.

The ladies were suitably impressed and amazed that I had continued renting my snake-infested garden for a couple of years after that. "I was just startled," I bragged, "I'm not afraid of snakes, I know how to handle them." When my widowed, 60-something, next-door-neighbor said that she was terrified of snakes, I told her not to worry, if she ever saw one in her yard, just to call me, I'd take care of it for her...

Well, I got what I asked for. This afternoon, as I was about to head out the door to my husband, Chainsaw Bob's, office, the phone rang. It was my neighbor.

"There's a snake in my yard. I think it's a rattlesnake. You said I should call you."

Mentally saying a few very unladylike words and hoping that she was mistaken in her identification, I replied, "That's okay, let me put on my big shoes and I'll be right over."

I put on my big shoes – wishing sincerely that I had a pair of thigh high boots – and grabbed a shovel. The shovel with the *long* handle. I shouldered my long-handled shovel and boldly marched next door. She met me at her back gate, her face puckered with worry.

"The dogs were barking and barking, so I went out to see what was wrong. There was a snake. It had its tail in the air. I think it's a rattlesnake. I put the dogs in. I called my son and he told me to call animal control. I was so afraid, they're so far away, then I remembered what you said."

I asked her how big it was. "Not too big," she drew a circle with her hands about the size of a small dinner plate and said it was all curled up except for its head and its tail.

We cautiously approached the spot where she'd seen the snake. It wasn't there. Holding my shovel by the end of the handle, I used it as a probe, lifting up branches, pushing aside plants.

Found it! In the back corner of the yard by the fence. Yes, it was rattlesnake, probably about three, three and a half feet long.

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Now what?

In Utah, rattlesnakes are a protected species. Unless one is in the act of striking at you, it's illegal to kill it.

My neighbor has two dogs with more enthusiasm than brains. The family on the other side has four- and seven-year-old boys. I have a year-old cat who thinks she's a mighty hunter and I have a predilection for wearing flip-flops, not to mention a husband who has a PhD but not a whole lot of common sense. I did *not* want a poisonous snake in my back yard or any of my neighbors'. I wanted to kill it. I didn't want to break the law, or go to jail, or to pay a fine, but I sure as heck wanted that snake gone and gone immediately.

The number to call for Snake Busters is 538-4700, Salt Lake County Wildlife Services. Unfortunately, you have to wait though the voice mail menus and the seemingly interminable hold music before you get to talk to someone who will take your report and send out the next available wildlife control officer. Meanwhile, who knows where the snake could go or what it could get up to while you wait for the men in uniform to arrive.

However, it being not too big a snake, me having a shovel with a long handle and my neighbor having an empty garbage can a quick game of "can the snake" was in order. The snake was cautiously scooped and herded into the open lawn and the can clamped over top of it. Oh yeah, I made sure to grind the edges of the can deep into the grass, to put weights on top of it so that even the Arnold Schwarzenagger of snakes couldn't lift

the can, and I was extremely careful while doing it. Used the can as a shield and worked around it. Took my pulse about an hour to return to normal.

The best thing was that the wildlife guy arrived before Chainsaw Bob got home. My beloved would surely have had to lift up the trash can to make sure it was a rattlesnake. He is, after all, a muy macho, testosterone fueled, manly man.

All kidding aside, I do know snakes pretty well. I like them and kept non-poisonous snakes as pets when I was a kid. If this had been a large rattlesnake, one of those seven or eight foot monsters, I would never have approached it with a shovel. I would have had my neighbor call Wildlife Services while I tried to keep an eye on it from a safe distance. Never, never would I go after a snake that was longer than my shovel's handle. A snake can strike the full length of its body; a seven foot snake can strike a target seven feet from the center of its coil. You may be bigger and smarter and maybe even meaner, but the snake is a heck of a lot faster. And potentially lethal. While it's true that there are only, on average, about a dozen deaths due to snake bite a year in this country, it's not a good idea to put yourself in line to be one of that dozen. So use common sense. If you're in a brushy area, wear sturdy shoes, long pants and sleeves, gloves. Don't stick your hands and feet into places you can't see. Look before you sit. Be aware of your surroundings. If you're hiking, take a walking stick or a ski pole and let it lead the way.

Be careful out there.

Rattlesnake Identification

- * Wide, triangular head with definite neck
- * Rattle on tail – usually, but not always
- * Heavy body
- * Usually brown or tan with darker markings

Don't get close enough to see these identifiers:

- * Fangs
- * Heat sensitive pits between the nostrils and the eyes.
- * Keeled scales
- * Vertical pupils (cat's eyes)

Treatment for Snake Bite

- * Get the victim to the hospital ASAP!
- * Try to keep the victim calm and immobile.
- * Keep bitten part below the level of the heart.
- * Splint bitten part to keep it from moving.
- * Remove any tight clothing or jewelry.
- * Wash wound with soap and water.

Do Not:

- * Ice the area of the bite.
- * Elevate it above heart level.
- * Use a tourniquet or try to suck out the venom.