



What to Do In The Garden in October

Have you gotten attached to an Orb weaving spider outside your back door that you call Charlotte? If you have, it is certainly autumn in your yard. A time for watching the leaves fall and the squirrels gather; a time to clean up, and simply appreciate the change of the seasons. No rush, no pressure. You can wind down and watch the sweet decay of the natural world and the way your plants, trees and shrubs slow down for a long winter's nap.

- **Plant your bulbs! Flower bulbs like Daffodils, Tulips, Hyacinth and Crocus get put in the ground now for a long, cold nap before arising in Spring. Plant in groups of 5 or more for a naturalized look.**
- **Now is a great time to plant your perennials, trees and shrubs. The weather is cool and there is less stress on your plants to get a good root settling -in. Roses also take very well when planted in the cool weather of the fall. Fruit trees, Leyland Cypress, Holly, Azalea and Rhododendron get a good head start when planted in the fall. If you have a plant that you would like to relocate, wait until it goes dormant (loses its leaves) to replant.**
- **Divide your plants. Daylilies, Irises and other clumping perennials make a lot of little summer babies which you can divide from the mother plant in the fall without causing them planting shock.**
- **Plant pansies. Pansies planted in the fall will winter over and come back beautifully in the spring. Flowers can last way into October and early November if a killing frost hasn't occurred.**
- **If you have Dahlias, wait until a light frost has wilted the leaves to dig the bulbs up for storage.**
- **When raking the leaves, put a light leaf cover on your gardens. Weeds and seeds won't be as anxious to pop up. A light leaf covering in the garden keeps the plants from the heaving damage that freezes and thaws create in the central NJ ground.**

- **Rake up yellowing and black rose and plant leaves and dispose of in the garbage to keep fungus away. Keeping rose hips on your hibernating roses helps protect them from the rages of the winter wind and ice.**
- **Instead of raking leaves, try mowing the leaves a few times on your lawn. The recycling of ground -up leaves will benefit your lawn and garden plot with, natural soil conditioners. Start a compost bin with leaves, Bumper**
- **Crop and clippings. By the spring, you'll have beautiful "black gold" to mix and mulch in your garden.**
- **Cut down dried perennial stalks in the garden. One-time blooming hydrangeas (as opposed to the Forever and Ever type) form their flower buds this summer for next summer's bloom, so cutting them will prevent flowers next year.**
- **Take a good look in the little jungle that is your tomato and vegetable garden. Green tomatoes on the vine that haven't ripened can be brought indoors and hung upside down in a warm room to ripen. Try making some fried green tomatoes too!**
- **There is still time to plant cool weather greens. Lettuces like Romaine and Radicchio can withstand a touch of frost, and get better with the cold.**
- **Tall, specimen grasses can be cut down or left to look wild and beautiful in the winter's snow.**
- **Remember the birds. They'll be foraging in the cooler weather, and if they find your yard to be welcoming with seed and suet, they'll stay all winter long.**
- **There is no better time to plant grass seed than in the autumn. Even when it snows you can throw grass seed on top of the white stuff—it will keep moist and ready for perfect germination in the spring.**

-Pat Dumas