PREPARING YOUR GARDEN FOR WINTER

Putting the garden to bed each fall not only marks the end of the growing season but also presents an opportunity to get a head start on the next season. Cut down and remove the past season’s annuals and vegetables, and if not diseased or insect infested, add them to the compost pile. Test your garden soil this fall if you have not done so in at least three years. Recommended nutrients and lime applied to the soil in the fall will have all winter to break down, making it ready to plant in the spring. Till under your garden soil in the fall and you will expose to the surface any insects or insect eggs which may be killed by cold temperatures. Fall tilling also makes spring planting easier. Cut back faded or dead foliage on perennials after the first hard frost, unless they add color to your garden in winter. Leave dead foliage on chrysanthemums, and they will overwinter better than those that were cut back.

Modern, bush-type roses (hybrid teas, floribundas, and grandifloras) require protection during the winter months. Exposure to low temperatures and rapid temperature changes can severely injure and often kill unprotected roses. Hilling or mounding soil around the base of each plant is an excellent way to protect bush-type roses. Mound the soil 10 to 12 inches high around the base of the canes. Place additional material, such as straw or leaves, over the mound of soil. Prepare modern roses for winter after plants have been hardened by several nights of temperatures in the low to mid-twenties.

Strawberries are also susceptible to winter injury. Temperatures below +20°F may kill flower buds and damage the roots and crowns of unprotected plants. Repeated freezing and thawing of the soil through the winter months can heave unprotected plants out of the soil and also cause considerable damage. The application of straw mulch in the fall is the best way to protect strawberries. Allow the strawberry plants to harden or acclimate to the cool fall temperatures before mulching the bed.

Rake up and compost fallen leaves on the lawn. Wrap trees, especially recently planted trees or thin barked trees, with a tree wrap. Wrap from the base of the trunk to the first branch, allowing some overlap to allow water to escape, then secure at the base of the crown. During the winter months, rabbits often gnaw on the bark of many woody plants. Heavy browsing can result in the complete girdling of small trees and small branches clipped off at snow level. Apple, pear, crabapple, and serviceberry are frequent targets of rabbits. Small trees with smooth, thin bark are the most vulnerable. The best way to prevent rabbit damage to young trees is to place a cylinder of hardware cloth (1/4 inch mesh wire fencing) around the tree trunk. The hardware cloth cylinder should stand about 1 to 2 inches from the tree trunk and 20

(Continued on page 2)
Dave Trinklein, the MU horticultural professor heading up the self-directed work team that replaced Master Gardener program coordinator Mary Kroening last year, gave the State of Gardening Address at the State Master Gardener Conference in Hannibal, Missouri, September 25.

He said more than 8,000 people have taken the program since it began in Missouri in 1983, but only 4,000 people remain active. There are 51 local chapters or affiliates.

His team’s short term goal is to develop on-line Master Gardener (MG) core training in order to make the program more available throughout the state. He and Jim Quinn received a grant for this purpose, and they are working with a curriculum specialist and hope to have it available to the public by August 2012. “We do not have a good method to tell administration the impact of the Master Gardener program to the state of Missouri,” Trinklein said. Extension’s mission is to improve the quality of life of individuals. “We want to know how the lives of people you serve are improved.” He said 44,581 service hours have been reported and 765,955 contacts have been made, but administrators want information on the impact the MG program has had on people’s lives. Another short-term goal is to communicate more effectively with Master Gardeners around the state. A fourth goal is the formation of the Missouri Master Gardener Association. Trinklein said that those states that have a State Master Gardener Association working with the State University, flourish more than in states without a Master Gardener Association.

Long term goals include: How can we do a better job of Master Gardener retention? Provide Advanced Training Opportunities; Marketing Strategy: Who we are, what we are about; Work with the State MG Association; Develop a library of audiovisual resources; Develop an instructor’s guide for the core training; Expand MG state projects (example—St. Louis plastic recycling). The top five categories from hours reported are: Beautification, Continuing Education, Fundraising, Development/Administration, and Master Gardener Meetings. The bottom five categories for hours reported are: Elderly Assistance, Garden ’n Grow, Conserving Water, Reducing Fertilizer/Pesticide Use, and Reducing Yard Waste (just 15 hours statewide).

Where do we go from here? Change is an inevitable part of life. A pessimist would see the loss of the Master Gardener coordinator as the sunset of the MG program. An optimist would say it is the sunrise of the MG program. George Hibbard, chairman of the State Master Gardener Advisory Board, then gave an update on the creation of the state association Trinklein mentioned. Hibbard said Trinklein’s team came to the Advisory Board in March and explained why a state association is important. The group has incorporated the Missouri Master Gardener Association, the URL MoMGA.org has been secured and MG volunteer Elaine Fix is the website creator. MoMGA has a tax id number and the group has nearly completed the IRS forms required to be a tax-exempt organization. “The Association should be ready to roll early next year,” Hibbard said. The role of the Association is to supplement what Master Gardener chapters are doing. The hope is that the Association will have more clout when decisions are made in Jefferson City and Columbia regarding the MG program. Extension will focus on the great education provided to MGs. The Association can expand what MG volunteers can do. Hibbard asked the audience to think how the Association can help their groups. “We are open to ideas,” he said.
LOCAL FOOD UPDATE—THE FALL HARVEST

Most of you know that my husband is the wrestling coach for Truman State University, and it just so happened that Truman’s fall break this year fell right during black walnut and persimmon harvest time and turkey season! We headed down to my parents’ farm in the Missouri Ozarks. It’s such a pretty time of year to take a trip to the Ozarks, and the weather was wonderful, sunny and warm. Soon after we arrived at the farm, the kids and I along with my dad, got in the truck and headed out to the fields to see the cows, and check out the persimmon grove. It’s so beautiful and peaceful out in the fields surrounded by cows at sunset. We also saw three deer and about 30 wild turkeys. My son Justin loves deer meat, and of course wanted his “papa” to shoot him a deer. Well, it’s not deer season, so that wasn’t going to happen, but it is turkey season! During the last day of our stay, my dad killed two turkeys early in the morning, and the boys and I went out to the field with him to clean them. Now, that’s exciting when you’re only four years old or 19 months old. They wanted feathers from the turkeys to take home, so they got about four feathers each. We had one of the turkey breasts for lunch that afternoon and it was very good. The birds were young jakes, so they were still tender. I took a turkey breast back with us and have it in the freezer to eat this winter.

We picked two coffee cans full of persimmons and brought back with us. We all love persimmon cookies. My dad stocked a pond behind his house with fish, so we spent some time with the boys fishing. They had such a great time catching bluegill, green sunfish, some big bass, and a good-sized catfish. We threw them all back so we could catch them again in the spring. My husband catches plenty of crappie and catfish from a lake so we don’t need to keep pond fish. They’re just a lot of fun to catch.

While on our visit to the farm, my husband and I were able to get away and go to Silver Dollar City in Branson, while our kids visited my sister and her family on their dairy farm. The entire family (parents, my sisters and their families, and us) had a wiener roast on our parents’ farm and then went to a pumpkin patch down the road. This place was amazing. I have never been to a pumpkin patch with so many different activities for kids. They had a train ride through a corn field, hay bale fort, hay bale slide, hay rides, pig races, duck races in water, shelled corn bin to play in, petting zoo, swings and much more. It is Springhill Pumpkin Patch north of Mountain Grove, MO. They are dairy farmers, and have been family friends for years. See their website for more information at http://www.springhillpumpkinpatch.com/.

We have been eating a lot of apples this fall. They are not local, but they are Missouri grown. So far we have had apple pancakes, apple salad, apple crisp, fried apples, and homemade apple sauce. I have a lot of acorn squash I need to start using, but the boys including the husband, aren’t fond of it. It’s been a great year here in Northeast Missouri for sweet potatoes. The dry weather we had in late summer and early fall really helped the sweet potato harvest. I harvested quite a few from the garden and they were large. Several years ago, a Master Gardener friend, Lurla, gave me a recipe for sweet potato pie. It is very good and if you have a lot of sweet potatoes, you should make one and try it. It tastes very much like pumpkin pie. You just substitute sweet potatoes for pumpkin.

As I write this I can see all the brightly colored flowers out in the extension garden: marigolds, zinnias and asters, and lots of tomato plants still with green tomatoes. Freezing temperatures are in the forecast this week, so that means the gardening season is coming to an end. It’s not the end for local eating though. My fruits and vegetables are preserved! Local meat producers will continue to have meat through the winter months. Local eggs will also still be available. Just check around your area. If you are not from Northeast Missouri, check with your local extension center for producers in your area. I’m not sure if I will continue with this column through the winter months. I may start it back up in March. Until next time, keep eating local and supporting local producers!

GARDEN PROGRAMS TO BE OFFERED IN MOBERLY

University of Missouri Extension will offer a Lunch ’n Learn program on November 4 at the Randolph County Health Department at 423 East Logan in Moberly. From 12:10-12:50, MU Extension Horticulture Specialist, Jennifer Schutter will present ”Preparing Your Garden For Winter”. From 1-2 p.m. Master Gardener Patty Truitt will present a program on ”Holiday Cooking With Herbs”. The programs are open to all interested persons and there is no cost to attend. Lunch will not be provided so you are encouraged to bring your own. To RSVP, please call the Randolph County Extension Center at 660-269-9656.
GARDENING TIPS FOR NOVEMBER

Vegetables
- Unused, finished compost is best tilled under to improve garden soils.
- Fall tilling the vegetable garden exposes many insect pests to winter cold, reducing their numbers in next year's garden.

Fruits
- Keep mulches pulled back several inches from the base of fruit trees to prevent bark injury from hungry mice and other rodents.
- Clean up and destroy fallen, spoiled or mummified fruits in the garden.
- Mulch strawberries for winter with straw. This should be done after several nights near 20º, but before temperatures drop into the teens. Apply straw loosely, but thick enough to hide plants from view.

Ornamentals
- Continue watering evergreens until the ground freezes. Soils must not be dry when winter arrives.
- Now is the ideal time to plant trees and shrubs. Before digging the hole, prepare the site by loosening the soil well beyond the drip line of each plant. Plant trees and shrubs at the depth they grew in the nursery and no deeper. Remove all wires, ropes and non-biodegradable materials from roots before back filling. Apply a 2 to 3-inch mulch layer, but stay several inches away from the trunk. Keep the soil moist, not wet, to the depth of the roots.
- Remove the spent flowers and foliage of perennials after they are damaged by frost.

Lawns
- To prevent injury to turf grasses, keep leaves raked.
- Continue mowing lawn grasses as long as they keep growing.
- A final fall application of fertilizer can be applied to bluegrass and fescue lawns now.

Miscellaneous
- Collect soil samples now to test for pH and nutritional levels.
- Roll up and store garden hoses on a warm, sunny day. It’s hard to get a cold hose to coil into a tight loop.

- Missouri Botanical Garden-

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 1: Heartland Master Gardener mtg., 7 pm, Brookfield Area Career Center, program—deer resistant plants.
November: Salt River Master Gardeners. No info at this time.
November: Fabius Master Gardener club meeting.
November 4: Lunch 'n Learn, Moberly, MO. See page 3 for details.
November 8: Sullivan Co. Master Gardener meeting, 6 pm, Methodist Church, Green City. Program—flower arranging.
November 8: Magic City Master Gardener meeting, 6:30 pm, Randolph County Extension Center.
November 10: Sullivan/Linn County Lady Landowner Workshop, Browning, MO. For information and to RSVP, contact the Putnam County Extension Center at 660-947-2705.
November 15: Kirksville Area Master Gardeners, 7 pm. Watch for emails with info.
November 28: Macon-Shelby Master Gardener meeting, 7 pm, Extension Center.

Spring 2012: Master Gardener training will be held in Macon. More information will be available in the January issue of Garden Talk.

MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER HOURS DUE NOVEMBER 30

It's time once again to compile your volunteer hours for 2011. Forms should be submitted to your club advisor at your November meeting, or submit your hours online in the Master Gardener volunteer reporting system at http://report.missourimastergardener.com/, which is the preferred method. It’s an easy way to keep track of your hours. We include volunteer hours in extension annual reports for each county in the northeast region. We will start pulling reports from the online system and tallying reports received, on December 1. Please do not be late or your hours will not be included. Every year we receive volunteer hours after the deadline. It is very important that I receive your hours in a timely manner. Remember to use the correct project codes for your activities. Also, 45 minutes is recorded as .75, 30 minutes is .5, and 15 minutes is .25.