

The Garden Corner

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Fall in Missouri – finally! We can say goodbye to the extreme heat and high humidity. Hurrah!! I don't know about you; but, that is cause for celebration – just be careful and give your keys to someone else. While we're thinking about having a good time, we might want to wonder around the grounds and see what mischief we can get into.

If you have some plants that have overgrown their space and have been putting off splitting and moving them, now is the time. Some things to keep in mind when you're doing the job are in order. Many of you know the crucial part good soil makes in plant development; so, make sure you expend the time and effort to give your new planting the best home possible – plenty of organic material and mulch for the coming winter. However, while you're preparing the soil, don't add fertilizer. The plant(s) would develop new growth as a result and this is the wrong time of year for that. And, don't forget to water until the ground freezes. By getting the plant into its new home now, you'll get really great root development and probably a certain guarantee for rapid growth in the spring.

Have you been thinking of adding a tree or a bush? Again, this is the perfect time for that addition. You will want to provide the same soil considerations you did for your plants; with one additional piece of trivia: As Stark Brothers recommends: "big a five dollar tree and dig a ten dollar hole". You'll be glad you expended the effort. Now, here's a place where the experts and I disagree. If you're planting a tree, for heaven's sake, stake the tree at least until next spring. The experts say not to ever stake at the time of planting because the young plant comes to depend on the support and will be weak as a result. All I can say is these experts have never lived through a Missouri winter with the howling winds – stake your tree!

Now, if you're not plum worn out from all this splitting and planting, you might want to put some spring bulbs in the ground. The daffodils, tulips, and crocus are always a welcomed sight after a long, cold winter. The sooner you get them into the ground the better the root development will be; but, you can plant the bulbs right up to the time of the ground freezing. If you can get your hands on some bone meal, it doesn't hurt to add a small handful to each hole. And, if you have squirrels running around the place, cover your bulb beds with chicken coop wire to keep them from digging them up. Deer will leave the daffodils alone; but, if you plant tulips, you'll have to fence them.

That will do it for this month. For your questions/comments/concerns I'm here for you at 370 NW 121 Rd., Warrensburg, MO 64093 or email: maandpak@embarqmail.com. Hope you enjoy this wonderful time of year!