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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for November

By Cynthia Brian



Falling leaves amongst the pansies Photos
Cynthia Brian

understand and value the humble tulip. Found in the wilds of central Asia, the first tulip bulbs were planted at Holland's Hortus Botanicus Leiden in 1593. Tulips were so highly sought after that Dutch growers around Haarlem devoted every minute to hybridization and cultivation resulting in one tulip bulb being so valuable that it could buy an Amsterdam house on the canal or 25 acres of prime farmland. Besides cheese, gin and herring, tulips reigned as kings of exportation. Tulipmania speculation collapsed in 1637, but not before these gorgeous flowers called Rembrandt tulips were depicted on Delft tiles, old master paintings and historic tapestries. If only a grower at the time had a crystal ball.

What to do in your November garden

PLANT your bulbs now through January. By planting a dozen or so bulbs per week, you will have a continuous show of color for the spring. Crocus, daffodils, tulips, wood hyacinths and Dutch iris are favorites.

THROW two or three matchsticks into each hole before planting bulbs. The sulphur kills insects and enriches the soil.

FERTILIZE your bulbs with a composition of 4-10-6 right after planting to help grow strong roots. Do not mix fertilizer into the hole. Do not use chicken or horse manure, mushroom or household compost (could be a breeding ground for fungus), or any acidic soil amendment. Bulbs require soil with neutral pH to develop their root system.

RESEED lawns with clover or Pearl's Premium (www.PearlsPremium.com) if you want grass without the guilt and the water surcharges. For tips on planting see <https://www.lamorindaweekly.com>.

"The small but intense pleasure of walking through dry leaves and kicking them up as you go ... they rustle, they bristle, they crackle." - Vita Sackville-West, "Walking through Leaves"

From the last rays of the autumn sun to the glowing embers of winter fires, November is a month of changing colors and softening light creating feasts for our eyes (and our Thanksgiving stomachs) while adding a warm glow to our hearts. The countryside is bathed with leaves turning gold, crimson, russet and orange. The harvest features a bounty of pumpkins, gourds and nuts. The crackle of the fallen leaves underfoot, the balmy days, chilly evenings and misty nights signal the sensational spectacle of autumn. It is time to put our gardens to bed.

For the past few weeks I have had the pleasure of visiting a selection of the great chateaus, castles, palaces and gardens in France and England. Crossed off my bucket list was the romantic landscape of Sissinghurst Castle Garden in Kent designed by author Vita Sackville-West. It was interesting to note how many of the 22,000 annuals, perennials, and herbs grown in her garden have established themselves nicely here in California.

It is time to plant your bulbs, especially tulips. Having lived in Holland for 18 months, I truly

com/archive/issue0918/Digging-Deep-Gardening-with-Cynthia-Brian.html.

CLEAN and store patio furniture. With an El Nino in the forecast, covering your outdoor furniture, pads, and pillows will not be enough. Give everything a good brushing, then put in the garage or watertight storage area.

CALL an arborist to inspect your large limbs and trunks before the storms arrive.

HARVEST walnuts, gourds and pumpkins.

DEADHEAD your roses weekly to maintain blossoms and fragrance throughout November and December. If you prefer the red and orange colors of fall, allow the rose hips to form and harvest for additional vitamin C.

STAKE young trees and prune dead or dried limbs from established mature trees.

STOP by your local nurseries to choose deciduous trees with vibrant fall colors that will suit your landscape. A tree planted on the north side protects gardens from the blustery winter winds.

TIDY your vegetable garden and potager. Add straw and mulch to enrich the soil over winter.

SHARPEN garden shears and tools before storing.

SCATTER ripe seeds of biennials and perennials, such as Foxglove and Echinacea, encouraging new plants in your garden. Hybrid varieties may not grow true from seed offering you a spring surprise.

PLANT autumn showy ground covers, color spots, and shrubs as they are in their full fall riotous splendor. Heuchera is an especially pretty perennial in its autumn robes offering foliage in a variety of textures, shapes and colors.

SOW winter crops of Swiss chard, broccoli, beets, carrots, cauliflower, lettuce, peas, turnips and spinach.

VISIT a vineyard to witness the golden and amber hues post harvest.

RAKE a pile of leaves. Let the kids frolic and kick, then add them to your compost pile. (Add the leaves, not the kids!)

ENJOY the fall foliage. Persimmons, pomegranates, and guava trees showcase their precious fruits. Savor the colors in anticipation of the holiday harvest next month.

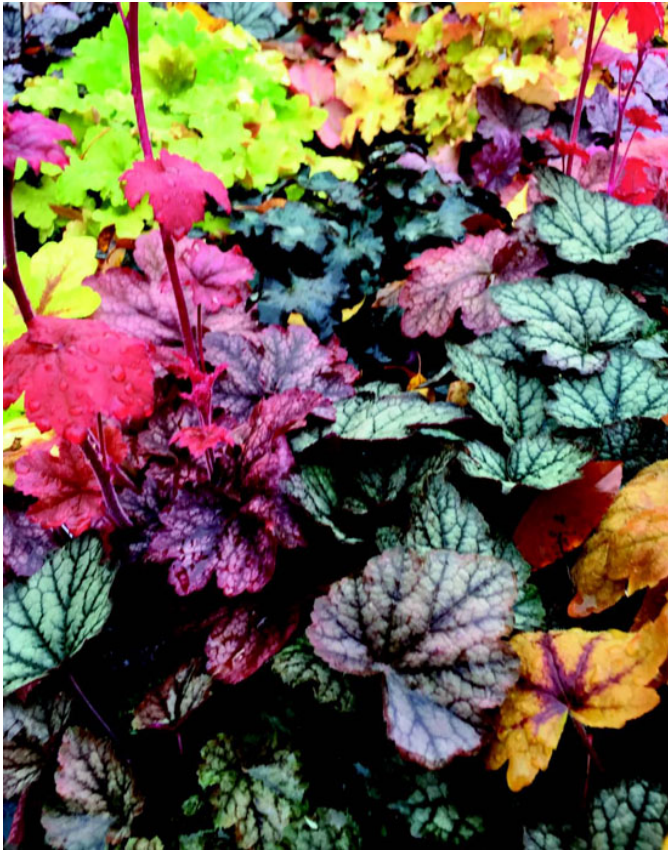
SHARE your gratitude.

May you celebrate a healthy, happy, and mouth-watering Thanksgiving with family and friends. Thank you so much for being loyal readers. Your thoughts and opinions are greatly appreciated.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing.



A view from the Tower of Sissinghurst gardens and across the Wealden countryside.



Heucheras offer foliage in a variety of autumn colors, textures and shapes.



These vegetable and herb beds are ready for rest. Photo Cynthia Brian



Tidy your garden work area. Photo Cynthia Brian

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