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## AUTUMN CHORES IN THE GARDEN

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Fall begins my gardening year. The hot languid days of summer shorten and the temperature dips. There is so much to do to set the stage for the year to come. The possibilities grow but time is short before winter comes. What to do?

- **Compost.** As you remove spent annuals, start a compost pile. Work in finished compost to renew your soil. Add compost to any planting holes.
- **Perennials.** Many can be divided this time of year. Shasta daisies, agapanthus, coreopsis, cannas, and daylilies as well as others can be moved or given to friends to rejuvenate the clumps and renew spring bloom. Fall planted perennials have a chance to establish roots before winter frosts.
- **Annuals.** Consider planting snapdragons, pansies, calendulas and sweet peas. Add lettuce to the vegetable garden as well as cool season vegetables.
- **Fruit trees.** Before the leaves fall consider light pruning of apricot trees. With the leaves still on the tree you can see which limbs can be pruned to let in more light. Remember to pick up dropped fruit as well as dried "mummies". Fall is a good time to apply the last half of yearly fertilizer and the first dose of dormant spray.
- **Roses.** Now is the time to stop deadheading. Allowing rose hips to grow allow the bush to enter dormancy. Heavy pruning can wait until winter, January or February.
- **Trees.** Break down watering basins before winter. Consider planting new trees and stake them for winter winds. Roots will be developed allowing a flush of spring growth.
- **Lawns.** Be sure to cut back watering as days shorten and temperatures cool. Fertilize 6-8 weeks before the first frost date in your area.
- **Bulbs.** Every garden can benefit from a few daffodils or something more exotic. Holding a dry, flakey bulb in your hands and imagining a beautiful spring flower is a true leap of faith.
- **Plant.** Fall is the best time to plant most garden plants and trees in mild winter climates. In this way, they get a chance to set down roots through the fall and winter and get prepared for growing in the spring.

There's much to do. See you in the garden!

More information regarding "Gardening throughout the Year" can be obtained from the University of California Cooperative Education website: <http://ceplacervevada.ucdavis.edu>

### References:

Sunset Western Garden Book. 2006

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