

OCTOBER GARDEN SCHEDULE FOR NEW YORK CITY

THE CITY LOT

LABELS. Now is an ideal time to label bulb beds, shrubs, perennials, as well as the trees in your garden. There are several kinds of labels available: plastic, zinc or wood. Lettering should be indelible waterproof ink to weather the seasons. The proper way to label is from the top down in legible print. Other information such as planting date, height, and color can be included on reverse side in the same way, from the top down. If your group wishes to invest in custom-engraved, permanent (3-ply plastic) labels, call CENYC for further information.

SANITATION. Fallen leaves from healthy trees in your garden are best collected and saved for mulching or composting. Do not allow weeds (plants growing where you do not want them) to go to seed now. Seeds are contained in the dying flowers. Pay particular attention to Thistle, Japanese Knotweed, Ragweed, Crabgrass, Purslane and Lamb's quarters. Remove and discard roots as well as seeds.

Throw out, do not compost, diseased stalks of Peonies, or other plants. Keep a sharp eye on your late-flowering Chrysanthemums, Snapdragons, Evergreens and other plants that attract aphids. A nicotine spray at this time will help to control this pest.

BORDERS AND BEDS. Beneficial changes can be made now by separating crowded plants. Generally, plants put in clumps which are broader than they are deep appear to better advantage than those planted in rectilinear strips. Consider carefully heights, colors, and flowering schedules as well as growing requirements for all species of plants involved. Perennial clumps usually require fertile soil as well as division and separation every 3 or 4 years to provide adequate root space. Save the healthiest outer (circumference) portion of the clump; cut away and discard diseased parts and share the rest. Advantages of doing this work now is that the weather is more predictable, memory of the past season is still fresh, and changes can be quickly accomplished when you know exactly what you want to do. Also, the transplants have an opportunity to develop roots before the first frost. Labeling your border plants now will avoid indecision in the spring. If several people are involved in maintaining the border, weeding will be easier if the boundaries of planting areas are set off with stout wire or cord and labeled.

TENDER PLANTS. They cannot tolerate frost and should be carefully watched and gradually brought indoors as you cut down on watering. Orange and other citrus trees that might have vacationed in your garden over the summer should come in, as should Geraniums, Fuchsias, Cinerarias, Lobelias, Petunias, Marigolds. Dahlias, Cannas, Caladiums and Gladioli are tender tuberous plants whose roots should be carefully dug up after the first killing frost and stored in a cold, dark, somewhat moist area. If the winter is mild and you mulch well, they may survive out-of-doors and flower next year.

Some of the herbs in your garden can be potted up and brought indoors for wintering on a cool sunny windowsill away from radiator or cold air drafts. Particularly interesting are the Scented Geraniums, Rosemary, Chives, Sage, Thyme, Basil and Lavender. They also make nice winter gifts to cheer up neighbors and friends.

VINES. For those cyclone fences whose only glory is being a trellis for twining vines, you can try for a lush early start next year by digging a trench 2 ft. wide x 2 ft. deep and adding a well-rotted manure or compost to your soil and then planting Sweet Peas in the usual manner. Morning Glories flower more profusely if grown in poor soil.

SOIL PREPARATION AND CONDITION. Now is a good time to take soil samples and condition the soil accordingly. Lime to correct pH and slow-acting fertilizers such as bone meal and cottonseed meal may be added if needed. Sheet composting with stable waste is an excellent program for the annual area of your garden. It is not too late to sow a "green manure" crop of Winter Rye or Clover seed which if planted now will provide a green grassy garden all winter long.

BULBS. Spring always seems so far away in October that few gardeners actually give their new bulb beds a chance. Daffodils need 12 weeks of weather above 40 degrees to develop adequate root systems. Smaller or minor bulbs such as Grape Hyacinth, Squill, Snowdrop, and Crocus should be planted no later than the end of this month. If the fall and winter are expected to be mild you may have some luck if planted later. Tulips and Lilies on the other hand can go in after mid-October as long as the ground is not frozen. Prepare well-drained bed to a depth of 2 ft.; add peat moss, lime and bone meal.

THE CITY LOT

TREES AND SHRUBS. Narrow-leaf Evergreens, e.g., Yew, Juniper, Pine, Arborvitae and Spruce bear cones and have needles. Broad-leafed Evergreens are Rhododendrons and Mountain Laurel. To avoid scorch, you must now allow the soil to dry out around the tender roots of both these Evergreens in the fall. Water during those late autumn warm spells and magical Indian Summer days. An early fall mulch of manure and woodchips or oak leaves will help stabilize soil temperature and conserve moisture in the soil. A thorough soaking below the frost line (1 ft. depth) before the ground freezes is good procedure. Newly planted Evergreens must be protected through their first winter in your garden.

Balled and burlapped or containerized materials can be planted in properly prepared pits. Soft, fleshy, rooted trees such as Magnolia, Birch, Dogwood and shrubs such as Rose of Sharon are much better planted in spring.

ANNUALS. You may try sowing the following annuals in the fall: Sweet Alyssum, hardy Snapdragon, California Poppy, Bachelor Button, Chives, Cosmos, Pinks, Candytuft, Sweet Pea, Portulaca, Pansy, Calendula and Cleome.

PERENNIALS. You may sow the following perennials: Monkshood, English Daisy, Larkspur, Hosta, Evening Primrose and Blazing Star.

In order to discourage rodents, established perennial areas should not be mulched until after the ground is frozen. Perennials with rosette-like lower leaves can be mulched under the leaves with peat moss to protect roots. Bushel baskets can be up-ended as covers and weighted down; this will protect them.