

SEPTEMBER GARDENING NEWS & TIPS

Well, nothing's changed since last month in the way of the hot weather. It's still unbearably hot and no rain to speak of. Everything is surely showing it too! The trees, shrubs, flowers, and grass looks so thirsty everywhere I go. We need some good, slow, soaking rain not a big down pour that just washes the soil away. I hope you have been working and watering your gardens and lawn. Beautiful yards take a lot less water than you think. In fact more lawns are damaged each year from over-watering than they are from lack of water.

Since we've had little or no rain here are a few water tips that might help bring back a little life into your gardens and lawns:

- Water in the early morning, between 4am and 8am to eliminate evaporation..
- Water the root area and avoid shallow watering.
- Water using a soaker hose or drip hose spread throughout a bed or around a tree under the outer branches as it will spread water a foot of either side. It uses 50% less water than a sprinkler.
- Spread 2 -3 inches of mulch over the root system to hold the moisture. Pine straw, pine bark nuggets or cypress mulch are all easy to use. I use shredded paper under my mulch because it allows the water to penetrate and then decomposes to enrich the soil. Do not mulch around tree trunks!
- Be sure to take this care with trees and shrubs planted within the last 5 months.
- Move from area to area allowing water to soak in, going back if needed, to prevent run-off.

Now to chores for September:

- Fall is the best time for planting. Temperatures are cooler and warm soil encourages vigorous root development. By the time spring comes, the plants that you set out now will have had time to root in and become established.
- Continue to mow, edge, and water as needed. Mowing in the evening when the grass is dry and temperatures are cooler is best.
- Ornamental Grasses provide four seasons of interest and are often at their best during the fall when their plumes appear. They are durable, low maintenance plants, rarely affected by insects and diseases. Not only do they add distinction to a

landscape, they also add an aspect of motion and sound. The gentle waving motion and sound create a peaceful atmosphere.

- Continue to remove spent flowers from Crape Myrtles and flowers and they may bloom again before frost.
- Sow seeds or set out bedding plants of broccoli, collars, kale, lettuce, mustard, spinach and turnips.
- As summer heat decreases, roses begin to perk up. Apply a water soluble fertilizer to the plants and you should get a last burst of blooms before frost. (20-20-20)
- Chrysanthemums are available now at the garden centers. They can be planted in containers or in the ground, adding beautiful color to your landscape.

There is much to be done this fall before the first frost so let's get busy making our places and Country Walk beautiful so we can be proud!

Kudos to all who have made improvements, roofing, painting, windows, fences, etc.! Kudos to all who have maintained and worked faithfully this summer in keeping their gardens and lawns looking beautiful! I am proud of you!

Now it's time for me to garden. Won't you join me in playing in the dirt?

Ann Taylor

