September 2018 - Vol. 4 No.9

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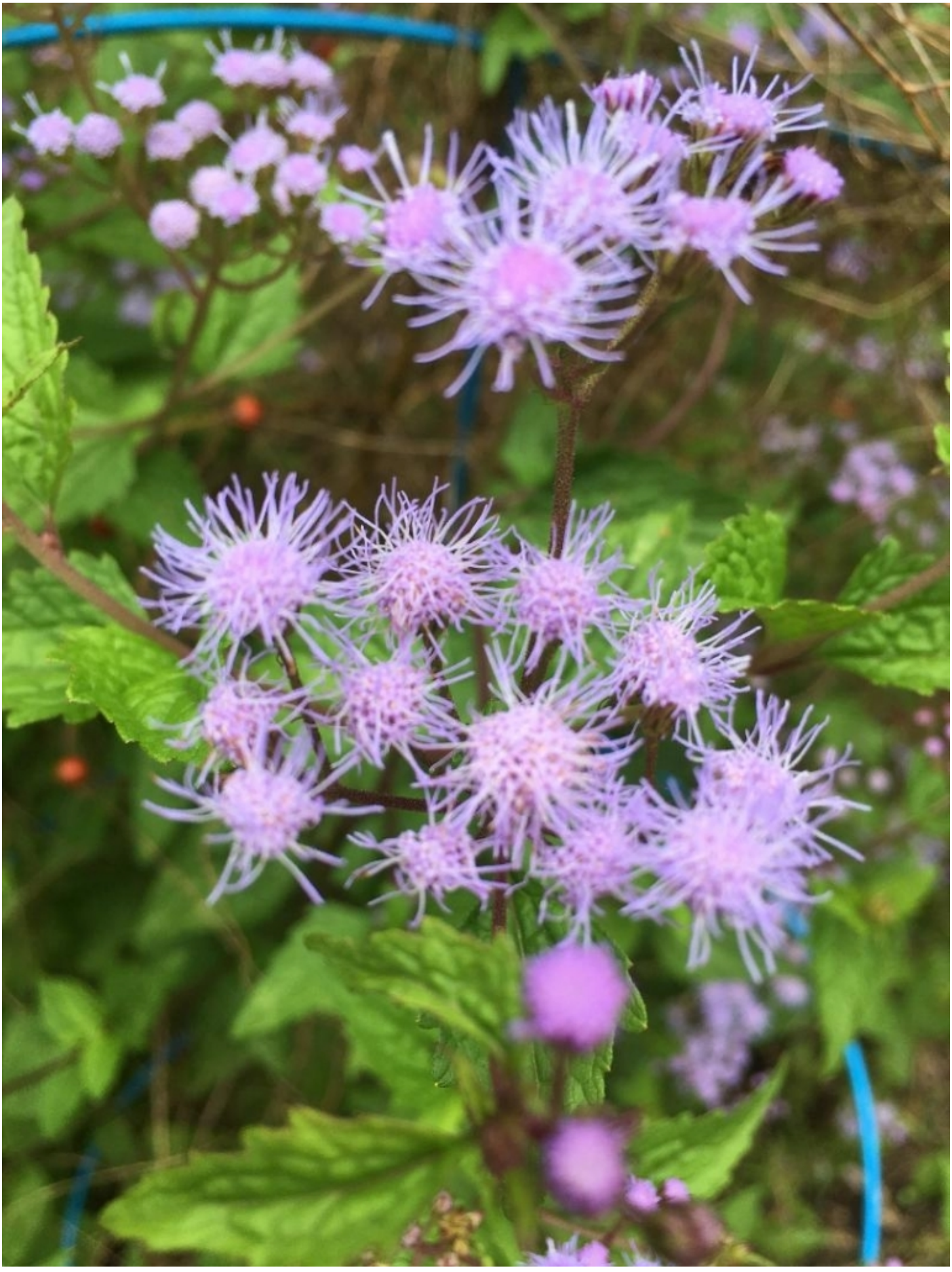
September-Blooming Natives for the Ornamental Garden

By Melanie | September 2018 - Vol. 4 No.9



It can be challenging to keep year-round bloom in the ornamental garden. However, with persistence, observation, and careful plant selection, keeping color in the flower beds throughout the year can be achieved. Finding the right plants for your garden space is essential for year-round bloom. It may take some trial and error, but the experience and knowledge gained will be worth the sacrifice in labor and potential plant loss. Sometimes when I really want a plant to grow in my garden, it won't. I find it astonishing that some plants grow with such ease that they are considered to be invasive. I agree that science is a key factor in getting your plants to grow, but knowing who they are, what they are doing, and their well being as you work with them will establish a foundation that will enhance your ornamental garden. The plants selected below are native September-blooming plants that can be incorporated into your flower beds to add bright, glowing hues for this upcoming fall season.

Photo courtesy of virginiawildflowers.org

New England Aster *(Aster novae-angliae* or *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)

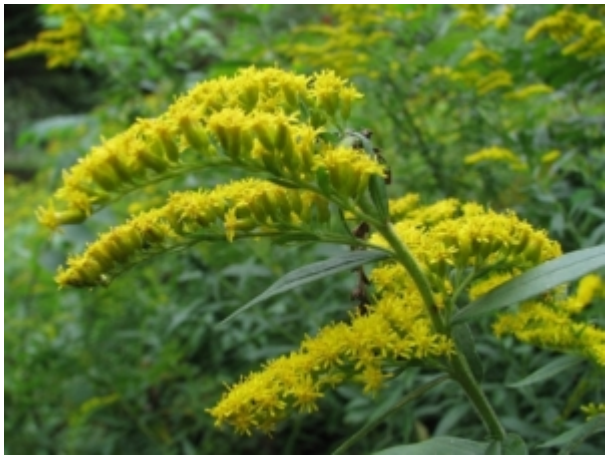
Hope Ryden mentions in her book *Wildflowers Around the Year* that there are 120 variations of asters. They can bloom in colors of orange, red, yellow, purple, pink, and white. I picked the New England aster because I favor the sharp purple color and thought it would blend well with the other native plants presented in this article. However, let it be known there are many asters to choose from that all bloom in the fall. They have a long bloom period because they flower in the fall when pollinators are not as active. Asters attract butterflies and have hairy stems to keep ground insects from easily climbing up their 4-6 foot stalks. Asters can grow in most garden beds with low nitrogen. They like moist soils and can grow in moderate light yet prefer full sun. They can grow from seed, sown in the fall, and will germinate in spring. Asters can be seen growing in meadows and ditches. Perhaps it would be a nice addition in the back of the flower bed to bring in autumn color. They do grow tall and may need to be staked if not cut back.

virginiawildflowers.org/new-england-aster

www.NaturalResourcesConservatonService.usda.gov/PlantFactSheet/New England Aster

Goldenrod (*Solidago Spp.)*

I have read there are eighty to one hundred different kinds of goldenrod. The species that are common in our area include *Solidago nemoralis* (gray goldenrod), *Solidago flexicaulis* (zigzag goldenrod), *Solidago rugosa* (wrinkeleaf goldenrod), and *Solidago speciosa* (showy goldenrod). It is very difficult to identify each species because they tend to hybridize (crossbreed). Goldenrod is usually blamed for seasonal hay fever, but the actual culprit is ragweed, not goldenrod. Goldenrod is a delightful plant that is best used in the back of the border. It grows best in well-drained soils in direct sun. It will thrive in ornamental beds with pH 4.5-5.5. A good indication that summer is ending is when



Solidago rugosa. Photo: Kerry Woods

goldenrod blooms, which will last until frost. I have worked with goldenrod for many years, and it can get aggressive in your beds so you must be diligent in keeping it in restricted areas. It CAN be managed. Its name means “I make whole” in Latin, referring to its medicinal uses as an antioxidant, diuretic, astringent, as well as an anti-fungal.

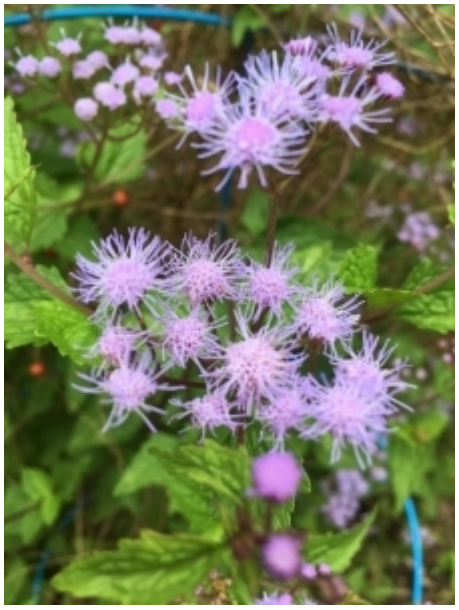
For a detailed article on goldenrod, including new cultivars, you’ll want tor read Pat Chadwick’s article in a previous issue of *The Garden Shed*, pmgarchives.com/goldenrod.

Piedmont Native Plants: A Guide for Landscapes and Gardens (Repp Glaettli, ed., Thomas Jefferson Soil & Water Conservation District)

NorthCarolinaCooperativeExtension/NCState/edu.solidago-rugosa/

www.auburn.edu.deancar/WildflowersofAlabama

Univ.ofArkansasExtension//yard-garden/resource-library/goldenrod



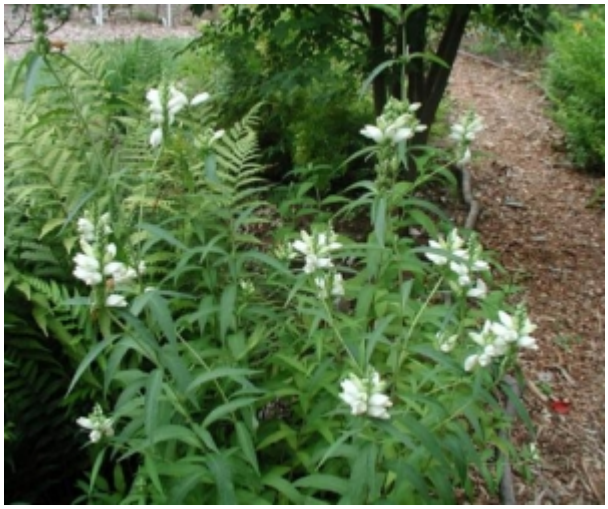
Blue MIstflower. Photo: Nona Kaplan

Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum* or *Eupatorium coelestinum*)

Blue mistflower is also commonly called wild ageratum or hardy ageratum. For an excellent discussion of this native, please refer to last month’s article “A Choice of Blue,” which explains the important differences between this native perennial and the nonnative annual *Ageratum houstonianum*. *pmgarchives.com/article/a-choice-of-blue*. The native blue mistflower makes a nice cut flower that can also be used in dried arrangements. It grows rapidly in rich moist soil (pH 5-6) and thrives in sun to light shaded areas. It can grow 1-2 feet tall. This plant will look lovely in front of asters and goldenrod. It grows easily and can be invasive, although it’s not difficult to manage by pulling out as a weed. I find the color of wild ageratum very enchanting, like a vivid twilight blue hue.

extension.U.Md.edu/blue-mist-flower-hardy-ageratum

USDA.gov/factsheet/BlueMistflower



White turtlehead. Photo: Jamie and Marina Berger

Turtleheads

Turtleheads (*Chelone*) will add an abundance of movement into the ornamental garden. This native is related to snapdragons and has a similar erect habit. I have always fancied the snapdragon, perhaps due to my early experience with *Alice in Wonderland*. Finding this native cousin was a delight. For a previous article on Chelone in The Garden Shed, you'll want to look at "Chelone: A Funny Name But a Sweet Flower," in pmgarchives.com/July2017

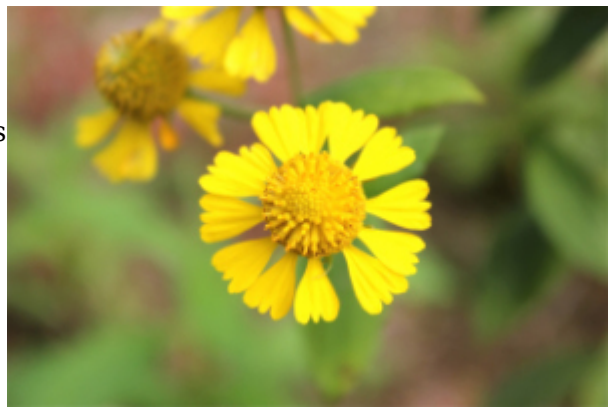
The turtlehead is also known as fish mouth or snake mouth, however the genus name *(Chelone)* means tortoise in Greek. It needs a fertile loam that is moist, with a pH 5-6. It should get 2 hours of direct sun, spending the rest of the day in partial shade. It divides well and is easily transplanted. It is known to be adaptable and can be very low maintenance once established, so long as its moisture requirements can be met. The white turtlehead (*Chelone glare)* is host to the endangered Baltimore checkerspot butterfly larva. This plant is known to have medicinal properties for the stomach and skin, but do not test this plant or any other plant for medicinal properties without seeking guidance from a credible herbalist.

virginiawildflowers.org/turtlehead

Dept.NaturalResources/Maryland.gov/Rare, Threatened and Endangered Animal Fact Sheet/Baltimore Checkerspot

Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale).*

This bright, happy flower is in the aster or sunflower family, and it is found in forests or natural areas along stream banks and in wet areas. The genus name, *Helenium*, refers to the famous Helen of Troy, and according to legend, these flowers arose from the ground where Helen's tears fell, though the connection to this famous lady of Greek myth is puzzling, since sneezeweed is a native of the Americas. This plant grows 2-5 feet tall and would fit in well with the other native plants mentioned in this article It needs moist soils with a pH 5-6. I have read that the flower heads were dried and crushed to make a snuff forcing one to sneeze to treat coughs, colds, and headaches. This plant can be toxic in large quantities; therefore, it is not advised to consume this plant. Sneezeweed can be started as seed and divided when matured. I think it is a whimsical flower that adds a lot of fun to an autumn wildflower bouquet.



Sneezeweed. Photo: virginiawildflower.org

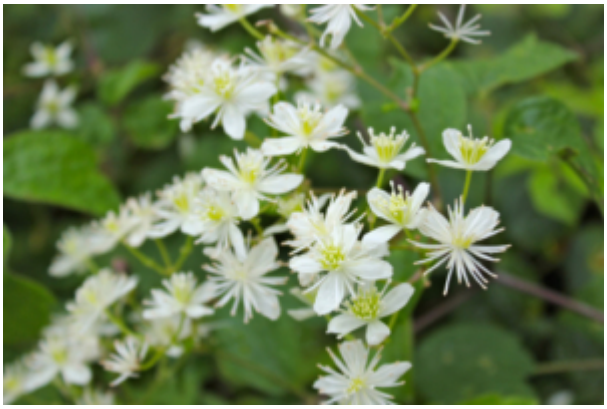
virginiawildflowers.org/sneezeweed

NCStateExtension/helenium-autumnale

Virgin's Bower (*Clematis Virginiana)*

This can be an aggressive vine; therefore, you should be very cautious if introducing this plant into the garden. I suggest it be used along a fence, lattice, or other designated area. It has been known as the traveler's joy because the vine creates a heavy drapery along roadsides that produce shade or shelter from rain. It is also known as Old Man's Beard.

www.mortonarb.org/virgins-bower



Virgin's Bower. Photo: virginiawildflowers.org

Other September blooming plants that I would like to mention are the buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis),* which is a deciduous shrub, and rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos).* The rose mallow is a white hibiscus. These could also be interesting additions to ornamental beds.

www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/buttonbush

www.wildflower.org/plants/HibiscusMoscheutos

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/fieldguide/critter/rose_mallow

Turfgrass Frustration in Central Virginia

By Cathy Caldwell | September 2018 - Vol. 4 No.9

Central Virginia is simply not a satisfying place to grow a grass lawn. This is frustrating for all of us, but especially for those new to the area. I spoke with the Master Gardener Program Chair for the Healthy Virginia Lawn Program in Albemarle County, Diane Lowe, who says she often hears, “I never had trouble growing grass in Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, etc.” Says Diane, “Boy, if I had a nickel for every time I heard this!”

The problem can’t be blamed solely on our acidic, clay soil. Mostly, it’s the fact that newcomers have landed in the dreaded “transition zone” of the grass-growing world — too cool for warm- season grass varieties, and too hot for cool-season grasses, which tend to go dormant in our summer heat. Our area just doesn’t provide the right conditions for either warm-season or cool-season varieties of grass. No wonder it’s frustrating.

"Aerating" the lawn. Photo: Jeff Boulter

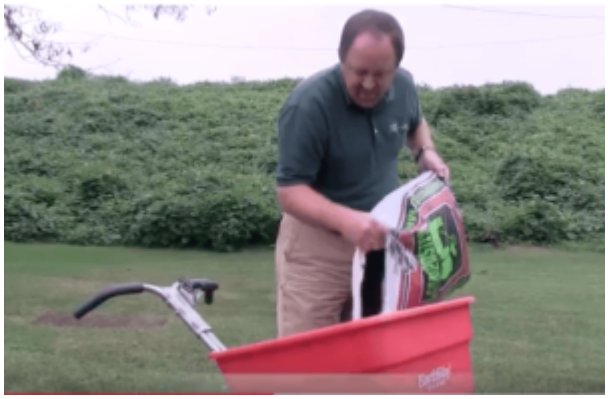
Here in the transition zone, most of us are growing (or trying to grow) one of the cool-season varieties of grass — typically, tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass. The warm-season grasses, such as zoysia grass, will go dormant during our cold winters, but that's a reasonable trade-off for some people. My neighbors have a zoysia lawn in their kids' play area, and it is thicker and healthier-looking than any other lawn around — but it turns brown in winter. If, like most of us, you have a tall fescue lawn, it has a tough time with our hot summers and with our clay soil, especially if it's compacted. As a result, it often gets thin and is vulnerable to weed invasions. Those of us who've been struggling in the transition zone for years can feel your pain, Newbies. But there are a few things you CAN do to improve your turf.

Perhaps one of the most important steps you can take to improve your lawn is to **work on your lawn primarily in the fall, not the spring.** The experts at the Virginia Cooperative Extension are on a mission to get us homeowners to stop focusing on our lawns in the spring and to switch our lawn-related efforts to the fall. This Extension article — "Breaking the Spring Seeding Cycle" — is well worth a read. ext.vt.edu//turfandgardentips/tips. And the cease-and-desist efforts are directed not just at spring grass seeding, but also at fertilizing and weed control. Apparently, it's just natural for us to emerge from winter and gaze expectantly at our lawns, eager to green them up and ready them for picnics and ball games. However natural it may feel, it's the wrong season for these activities, despite the presence of lawn seed and fertilizer at the garden stores!

September is the pefect time to work on your lawn. Fall is the season to improve your soil and to fertilize, if needed. Take a look at this helpful **Maintenance Calendar for Cool-Season Turfgrass Lawns in Virginia**: VaTech/edu/Pub. No. 430-523. It indicates the proper times to fertilize and to use a pre-emergent or post-emergent weed herbicide, if you've decided to do this. There's a maintenance calendar for warm-season grasses as well. pubs.ext.vt.edu/Pub.No.430-522 (2014).

By the way, if you're looking for an **alternative to the standard lawn weed treatment** — the chemical herbicide 2,4-D — you'll be interested in new iron-based herbicides whose active ingredient is simply chelated iron — the same thing that is used to treat iron deficiency in plants. Apparently grass can tolerate an overdose of iron, but most weeds can't. Check out this new kind of weed treatment for lawns in "Iron-Based Herbicides: Alternative Materials for Weed Control in Landscapes and Lawns," Univ.Md.Extension.umd.edu/md.edu

Spread Compost on your Lawn



Spreading compost on the lawn
Photo: courtesy of Va. Tech

Yup, you read that correctly; compost ON your lawn. Spread as little as ¼ inch (not more than 1/2 inch) of compost on your lawn twice a year, and your soil — and as a result, your turf grass — will gradually improve dramatically. Compost will improve your soil's structure, reducing compaction and enhancing moisture retention, and because it contains nutrients normally found in fertilizer, it will reduce the need to fertilize, thereby reducing fertilizer run-off, a menace to our ecosystems. To learn more about lawn composting, watch this brief video prepared by a turfgrass expert at Va. Tech. ext.vt.edu/lawn-garden/turfandgardentips/pete-dye/index.html. This is an entire series of lawn care videos entitled "A Lawn to Dye For" that were prepared at Tech's Pete Dye Golf Course, and all are worth viewing. You'll have to scroll down a bit to find the one on lawn composting.

Spread lime, if needed. Spreading lime on the lawn is a regular task in this area because our soils tend to be acid — not the optimum pH for most turfgrass — and dolomitic limestone increases the soil pH to make soil more alkaline. A soil test will tell you how much lime your lawn soil needs so that necessary nutrients are actually available to the grass.

Proper fertilization will indeed help your grass, but **the best time to fertilize is fall.** That's because "fall presents growing conditions conducive for improving turf density through the development of new shoots and stems, increased carbohydrate storage (i.e., food for the plant), and enhanced root production." Va.Tech.Ext. Pub. No.430-520/FallLawnCare. So fall is THE time to thicken your cool-season lawn! And thicker turf will just naturally keep the weeds down.

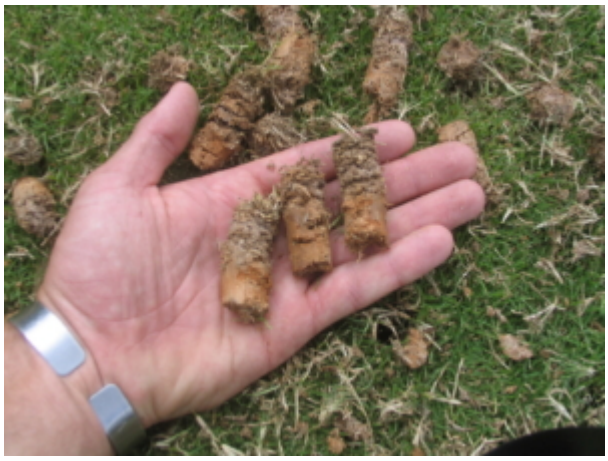
Keep in mind, however, that your grass is actually just a whole lot of plants, and like any plant, it will thrive only in soil that suits its needs. Too many of us assume that when it comes to fertilizer, "If a little bit is good, twice as much is better." NOT TRUE! **Before you fertilize, collect some soil samples in your yard and order a soil test from the Virginia Extension Office** (Get the little soil sample box you need and directions at the local Extension Office, Fifth St. Extended Building, 460 Stagecoach Rd, Charlottesville). If it's been **three years or more** since you had your lawn soil tested, you're due!

The soil test report provided by the experts at Va. Tech's Soil Testing Lab will tell you what nutrients your soil is lacking and if it needs lime and/or fertilizer in order for your turfgrass to thrive. Getting these amounts right is critical to success, and also to the health of our rivers and lakes. Ext.VaTech.edu/Pub. No. 426-059/"Groundwater Quality and the Use of Lawn and Garden Chemicals by Homeowners" A soil test of your lawn soil will measure and makes recommendations for the following major nutrients needed by turfgrass: P (phosphorus); K (potassium); Ca (Calcium); Mg (Magnesium) and five micronutrients. In addition, the test determines the soil pH and makes recommendations on how to raise or lower the pH. The nitrogen (N) requirements for turfgrass cannot be reliably determined by a soil test, but the report will nevertheless contain a nitrogen recommendation for the kind of grass being grown. Thus, the report will tell you exactly what to add so that your soil can feed your grass without damaging our water supply with fertilizer run-off.

For detailed information on meeting the nitrogen needs of a lawn, how to calculate amounts of nitrogen and properly spread them, you'll want to look at Ext/VaTech/LawnFertilizationVirginia. I'll warn you now, there's math involved! Virginia Tech recommends **0.7 lbs of Nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft** — twice in the fall. If, like me, you avoid math like a plague, you can simplify this calculation by using the older recommendation of 1.0 lbs N/1000 sq. ft. in the fall (the N stands for nitrogen).

But you can avoid these calculations by using the Healthy Virginia Lawn service, which does the calculating for you! It provides clients with the exact amount of a specific fertilizer they need *based on their total square footage of lawn and the soil test recommendations from Va. Tech*. So for example, you might be told to spread 140 lbs of a 16-4-8 fertilizer two times, 4-6 weeks apart, in the fall. If this sounds good to you, can can sign up for a consultation with the Healthy Virginia Lawns program. For more information, call 434-872-4580 or email hvl.albemarle@vt.edu. Here's a link to the brochure. Healthy Va. Lawns Brochure.

Remember, those three numbers on a bag of fertilizer stand for the percent by weight of nitrogen, phosphate (for phosphorus), and potash (for potassium) in the fertilizer. Mature lawns often have adequate levels of phosphorus and potassium, so maintenance fertilizers containing only nitrogen are often used on these lawns.



Lawn Aeration
Photo: Oregon State University

Because cool-season grasses are actively growing in the fall, it's a good time to aerate your lawn, especially in heavy traffic sections and other compacted areas. Soil compaction hinders the grass's root development because it physically restricts root penetration and reduces the oxygen levels required in the soil for root development. Core aeration (removing plugs from the soil is a standard method for improving soil aeration. Now's the time to do it! VaTechExt./Pub No. 430-520/FallLawnCare.

Use the resources and services of the Virginia Extension Service at Virginia Tech. The resources directed at lawn and turfgrass issues through the Virginia Extension Service are extensive. For any question you may have, you're likely to find help on the Extension website. For example, if you're wondering if your lawn spreader is properly calibrated, you'll find help at pubs.ext.vt.edu/Pub. No.430-017/"Calibrating your Lawn Spreader". For the list of publications that address lawn and turfgrass, see pubs.ext.vt.edu/category/lawns.

SOURCES

"Fall Lawn Care," pubs.ext.vt.edu/Pub.No. 430-520

"A Virginian's Year-Round Guide to Yard Care: Tips and Techniques for Healthy Lawns and Gardens," www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/document/yardcare.pdf (Va.Dept.of Conservation & Recreation).

"What Grass Should I Grow for my Lawn," Va.Tech.edu/newsletter-archive/cses/2008-03

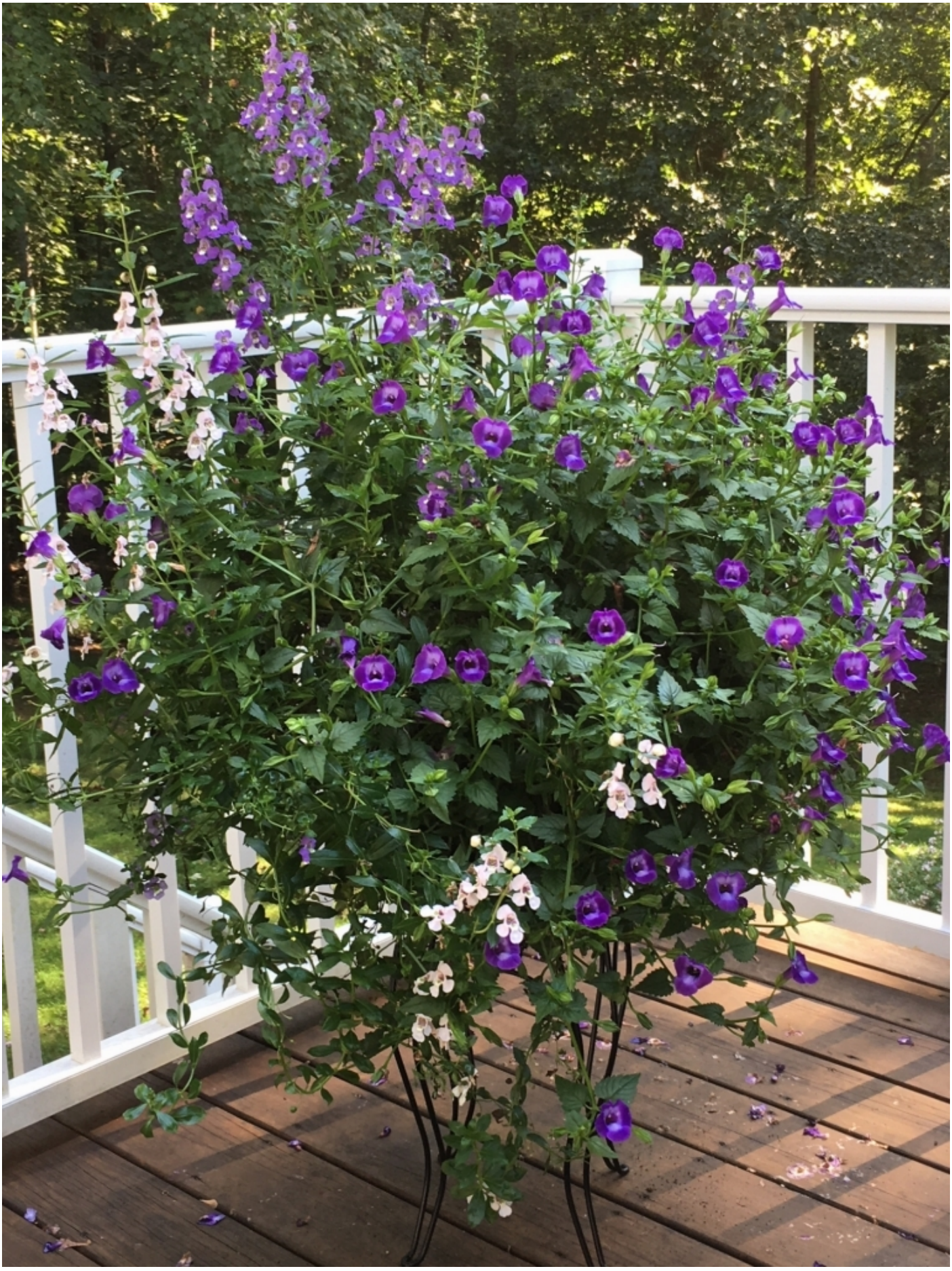
pubs.ext.vt.edu/category/Resources for Lawns

"Establishing Lawns," pubs.ext.vt.edu/Pub.No.426-718.pdf

"Lawn Fertilization in Virginia," pubs.ext.vt.edu/CSES-135

The Ornamental Garden in September

By Susan Martin | September 2018 - Vol. 4 No.9



Although the ornamental garden is getting a little drowsy at this point, we can still enjoy end-of-season blooms in the rich hues of early fall. September is also a time to complete some necessary chores that will help make the most of our mature gardens, as well as ensuring a healthy re-emergence next spring.

WATER, WEED, AND TIDY

In addition to the all-important tasks of watering and weeding, it's important to keep garden beds clean of plant foliage that might carry fungus or other diseases from this season to the next. **Bag up diseased plant material and discard;** don't add it to the compost pile. As perennials die back in the fall, be sure to cut off the dead foliage and discard since the foliage could encourage insects and disease. Don't cut off the brown fronds of your ferns in fall since the old fronds help protect the center through the winter. Once you see new green fronds in spring, you can carefully remove the brown fronds. Or, just let them fade off naturally. **Re-edge your garden beds** to make them look sharp and tidy.

PREVENT DEER DAMAGE

Prevent deer damage by putting up plastic fencing around vulnerable shrubs and trees to protect them from both deer browsing and antler rubbing. You can also strategically place 4-5 tall metal fencing stakes around small trees to protect from deer.

DIVIDE PERENNIALS

Early fall is a good time to divide many kinds of perennials, but transplants need at least six weeks to get established before winter. Therefore, divide plants in our area six weeks before October 31, the average first hard frost (32 degrees). There's a 50% chance of first hard frost by October 31; a 10% chance by October 13; and a 90% chance by November 18. (As many have noted, however, global warming has made these expected dates less reliable.) This would mean a target planting date of around the second-to-third week of September. Another guideline is soil temperature; root development stops once soil temperature drops below 40 degrees. As a general rule, spring-blooming plants are divided in fall, and summer-blooming plants are divided in spring. Many plants, however, can be divided in either spring or fall. Some perennials, including many with long tap roots such as *Baptisia australis*, do not respond to division. Check guidelines for specific plants before dividing. For detailed guidelines on division, see the Clemson Cooperative Extension publication on "Dividing Perennials."

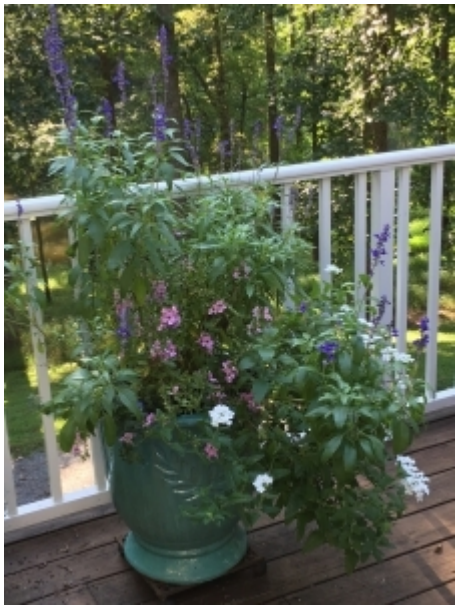
In addition to being the **prime season for planting trees and shrubs,** fall is also a good time to plant perennials that you might find on sale at the end of season. Just be aware of the same first-frost date and 6-week guideline as described above.

TRANSITION SUMMER CONTAINER PLANTINGS TO FALL DISPLAYS

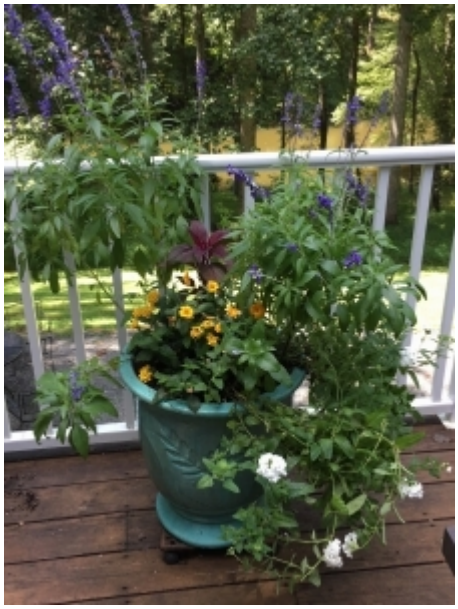
Some of our annuals in the garden and in containers are beginning to look a little spent. But when the hummingbirds and the bees are still daily visitors, it's hard to callously discard popular sources of nectar such as annual salvia. Another alternative is to save the healthiest plants with the most complementary fall colors and add fresh plants. In the summer, I like to work with blue, lavender, pink and white. In the fall, I remove from the containers pink flowers as well as any plants that are spent, and add fresh plants in colors of gold, orange, burgundy and rust. It takes just a few weeks for the newcomers to fit in with their fuller, taller, established companions. Sometimes it doesn't take much to create a new autumnal palette!

In Container 1, pictured below, I removed pink *Angelonia augustifolia* (summer snapdragon). At some point, I'll probably also need to take out the annual blue salvia, but since it's still a pollinator magnet, I'll keep it a while longer. I also kept trailing white verbena and then added Bandana® *Lantana camara*, Lady Godiva™

yellow *Calendula* hybrid (English marigold), and *Celosia argentia* 'Dragon's Breath'.

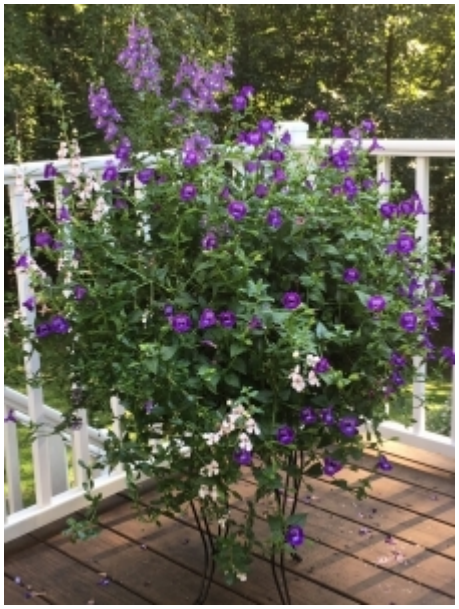


Container 1 Summer

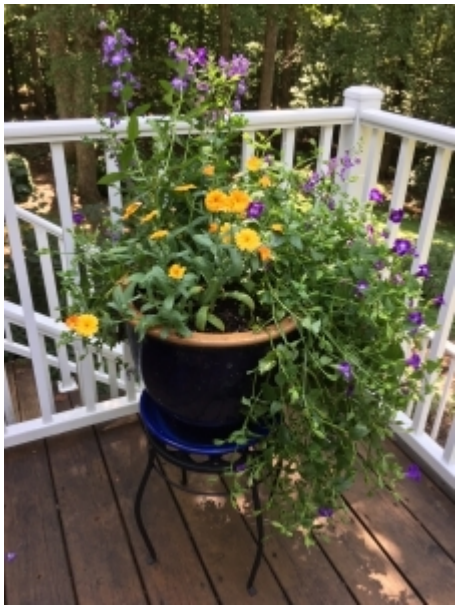


Container 1 Fall

Container 2 was a mass of purple *Torenia fournieri* (wishbone flower) and angelonia in purple and pale pink. I removed the pale pink angelonia and added Lady Godiva™ Calendula. Both planters will need some additional tinkering as September wears on, but for now, they look fresher and more seasonal.



Container 2 Summer



Container 2 Fall

AVOID FALL PRUNING

Resist the urge to grab your pruning shears when you want to "tidy up a bit." You can remove dead branches on your bushes but then put away the clippers. Bushes that bloom on new wood can be pruned in late winter.

Bushes that bloom on old wood can be pruned right after they bloom in spring or summer. If you prune in fall, you might mistakenly prune off buds that have already set for spring bloom. Or, you could encourage a late season blush of growth just when a plant should be quieting down for winter.

FALL PESTS

This is the time of year when we notice large webs in many of our trees. Can we ignore them or should we opt for some kind of insecticide treatment?

The **fall webworm, *Hyphantria cunea*,** is a general feeder on nearly all trees except conifers. The insect makes webs at branch tips and is harmful mainly to the beauty of the host. Hosts are seldom seriously harmed because defoliation usually occurs later in summer rather than during a period of active growth and not enough terminal growth is consumed to affect tree growth. In addition, more than 75 natural enemies parasitize and prey on the fall webworm. Branches that have active webs ("nests") may be cut out and destroyed. Webs are always on branch ends and are easier to remove when they are small. Pole pruners are helpful for reaching into trees. It is considered to be more of a nuisance than a threat to the health of the tree.

Another tent-forming caterpillar is the **eastern tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma americanum***. While fall webworm caterpillars nest at branch tips and feed inside the webbing, eastern tent caterpillars make webbed silk nests in a fork of a branch or tree trunk and leave the nest to feed. Young caterpillars feed during the day and remain in the tent at night; older (and larger) caterpillars feed at night and remain in the tent during the day. As with the fall webworm, it is not necessary to spray insecticides to control the eastern tent caterpillar. Healthy defoliated trees will grow new leaves. Infested trees can be unsightly and are less vigorous than attacked trees, but they are seldom killed. Typical natural controls include birds, predaceous and parasitic insects (especially wasps), and disease organisms. Small tents can be pruned off or wrapped around the end of a broomstick or pole that has a small brush or nails mounted on the end. Caterpillars can also be handpicked and dropped into soapy water.

For more information on identification, life cycle, and treatment options, see the VCE publications, Eastern Tent Caterpillar and Fall Webworm. Refer also to the Missouri Botanical Garden online site on Fall Webworm and Eastern Tent Caterpillar.

BULBS

Spring-blooming **bulbs can be planted throughout the fall until the ground is frozen.** They do best if planted about a month before the ground freezes. A good rule of thumb is to plant bulbs when the average nighttime temperatures are in the 40- to 50-degree range. If bulbs are bought before planting time, store them in a cool, dry, dark place at a temperature of 60˚ to 65˚F. See the September 2015 Tasks and Tips article in *The Garden Shed* for recommendations of deer-resistant spring-blooming bulbs in addition to daffodils.

SAVE SEED

Many plants provide seeds that are easy to collect and easy to sow. Zinnias and marigolds are two of the easiest. Just be aware that the seeds of cultivars will not grow true to the parent plant. But that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Our cultivar marigolds have self-seeded and have also been collected and sowed. This year, all the plants had orange blooms, except for one plant which had yellow flowers. It was a fun surprise! The blooms, however, are now noticeably smaller than those of the original plants. *Cleome hassleriana,* or spider flower, is a very tall, large-blossomed annual with obvious seed pods that are easy to collect and easy to grow. Rather than collecting and storing seed in the fall and planting in the spring, you can sow fresh seed

from your favorite annuals in the fall just by shaking out the dried seed heads. Make a note of where the seeds have been shaken so that you don't mistakenly weed out the seedlings next spring. For more information on collecting and saving seed, see *The Garden Shed* article, "Growing Plants From Seed You Collect."

In the meantime, enjoy fall "in the moment"— the only way to fully appreciate its beauty!

RECOMMENDED READINGS

For more September garden tips, see past issues of The Garden Shed, 2016 and 2017, as well as the Virginia Cooperative Extension September Tips.

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Garden Tour, Garden Basics Classes & a Tent Sale!

By Cathy Caldwell | September 2018 - Vol. 4 No.9

Treasures for Every Room
Fall Tent Sale to Benefit Local Gardening Community

Saturday, October 13, 2018
10 a.m. — 2 p.m.
The Shops at Stonefield

Crystal · China · Table and Bed Linens · Jewelry· Small Appliances · Picture Frames · Kitchen Items · Crafts · Books · Collectibles · and much more!

AND a Help Desk
for your gardening questions

Free Parking
Credit cards, checks and cash will be accepted
Information: 434.872.4581

Through The Garden Gate: Meredith Mercer Garden

September 8 @ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Meredith Mercer Garden, 2000 Hessian Road
Charlottesville, VA + Google Map

When Meredith moved to Charlottesville in2006, top on the list of criteria for a new home was having space for an extensive garden that she could develop from scratch.

Admission is $5 at the door

Find out more »

Garden Basics: Planting for Pollinators

September 15 @ 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Trinity Episcopal Church, 1118 Preston Avenue
Charlottesville, 22903 + Google Map

As they flit around gathering food, pollinators are dong a big job for us. Get acquainted with these fascinating creatures and discover how you can create an attractive habitat that makes your garden a feast for pollinators. COST: FREE HOW…

Find out more »

October 2018

Garden Basics: Shade Gardening

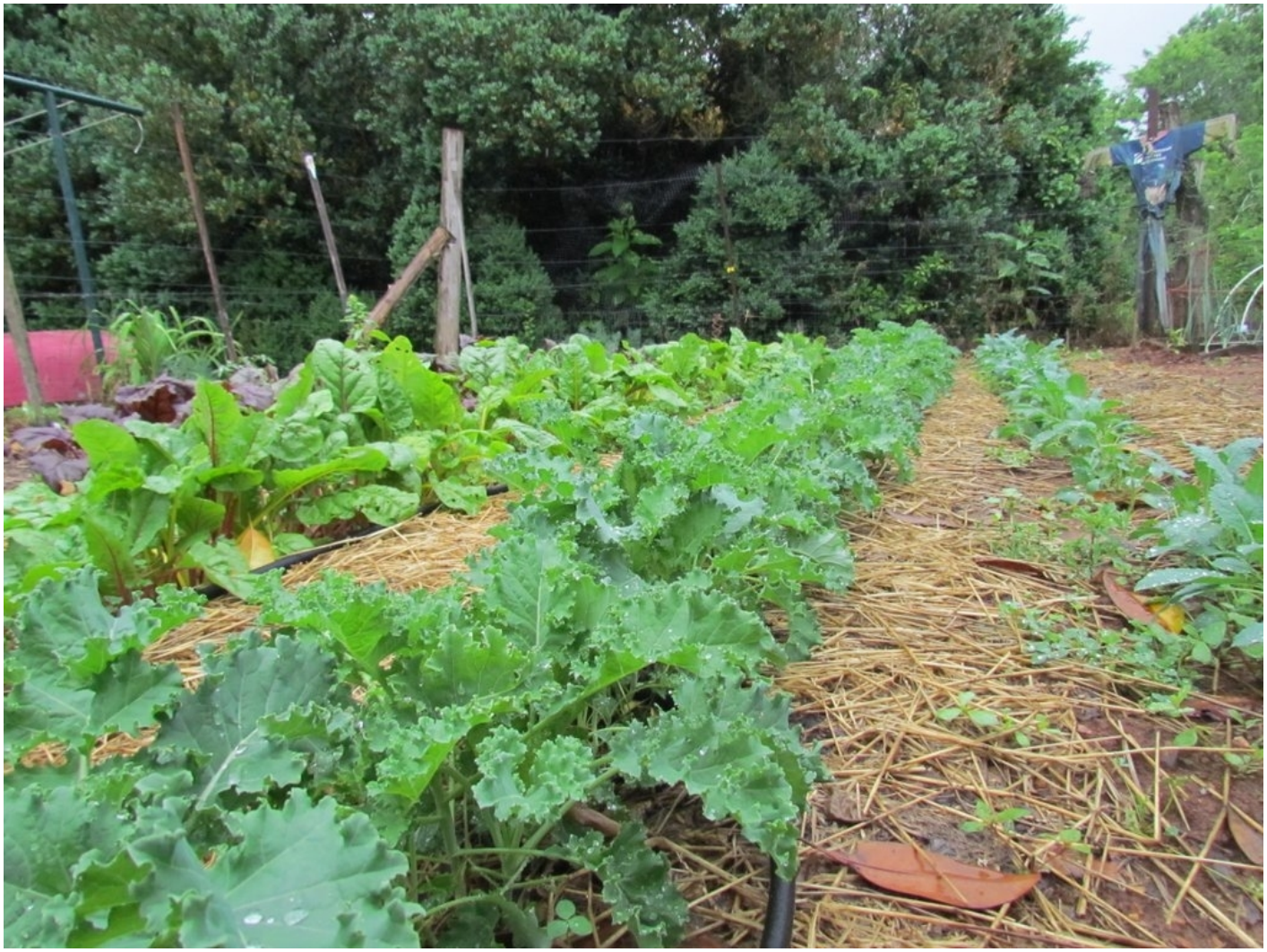
October 13 @ 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Trinity Episcopal Church, 1118 Preston Avenue
Charlottesville, 22903 + Google Map

Do you have a shady spot where nothing will grow? Learn how to love your shady landscape by turning this problem into an eye-catching asset. COST: FREE HOW TO REGISTER: Send your name and name of class to info@pmgarchives.com

Find out more »

Fall Vegetable Gardening

By Cathy Caldwell | September 2018 - Vol. 4 No.9



Fall is an especially satisfying time in the vegetable garden. If you haven't tried it, you're in for a treat.

If you're new to fall vegetable gardening, you'll be able to hit the ground running with Cleve Campbell's thorough and extremely informative article "**Planning the Fall Vegetable Garden"** from the July 2016 issue of *The Garden Shed*. pmgarchives.com/article/planning-the-fall-vegetable-garden/. Even if you're a seasoned gardener, you'll probably learn a new thing or two.

If you'd like to grow lettuce and spinach, you can start them in September. For an excellent guide to growing these and other cool-season greens, go straight to David Garth's article "**Growing Fresh Fall Greens,**" in the August 2015 issue of *The Garden Shed*, pmgarchives.com/article/growing-fresh-fall-greens/

For a helpful list of September tasks in the vegetable garden, go to pmgarchives.com/article/september-tips-and-tasks-in-the-vegetable-garden/

The Vegetable Garden To-Do List

By Cleve Campbell | September 2018 - Vol. 4 No.9

WOW, this year the “Dog Days of August” morphed into the “rainy days of August.” Sometimes too much a good thing becomes a challenge for even the most experienced gardener. Especially challenging this summer were the diseases in the tomato patch caused by an abnormally wet summer. One of the great attributes of gardening is that there is always a reset button, and a fall garden offers us gardeners a new gardening opportunity.

September in the Piedmont is a month that transitions into fall with hot summer days but cooling nights. It’s also a month that confronts the gardener with mixed feelings. After a long season of planting, weeding, harvesting, and battling an ever-changing list of pests, I sometimes wish that the season would just come to an end! At other times, I want to extend the growing and harvesting season into winter. But, mixed feelings or not, there are always gardening tasks to do, and here is my list for September. Let’s begin with the short version of the **September To-Do List**: continue harvesting vegetables, continue removing spent spring and summer crops, plant fall crops, and cover crops, and, of course, continue weeding.

Here in central Virginia, we can harvest fresh produce well into the fall and often into early winter. No matter how ragged the summer garden looks, a fall garden offers us not only a second growing season, but also a second chance to plant those early spring crops that failed in the summer heat. September in central Virginia is a continuation of fall planting season and a time to begin preparing the garden for winter by planting cover crops in vacated areas of the garden.

The following planting chart was created by using the Virginia Cooperative Extension Publication 426-331, “Fall Vegetable Gardening.”

September 1-10	**September 11-20**	**September 21-31**
Beets	Beets	
Endive	Endive	
Kale	Kale	
Lettuce, bibb	Lettuce, bibb	Lettuce, bibb
Lettuce, leaf	Lettuce, leaf	Lettuce, leaf
Mustard	Mustard	Mustard
Radishes	Radishes	Radishes
Spinach	Spinach	Spinach
Turnips	Turnips	Turnips
	Cover Crops:	
Winter Rye	Winter Rye	Winter Rye

Plant garlic in our area during the month of October. Remember, many retailers quickly exhaust their inventories of the most popular varieties before October. **If you haven't purchased garlic for fall planting, time is running out.** A few garden centers in our area sell garlic bulbs for fall planting, but the varieties are somewhat limited. However, an online search for "Garlic Bulbs for Sale" will bring up numerous sources. For additional information, check out the article on growing garlic in the October 2015 issue of *The Garden Shed*.

September is an excellent time to sow **cover crop**s in bare areas of your garden. For additional information on cover crops, refer to the September 2015 issue of *The Garden Shed*.

Give your tomato plants one last feeding. Compost tea or fish emulsion should give them the extra energy they need to make that final push at the end of the season. **Pinching off small green tomatoes and any new flowers** will channel the plant's energy into ripening the remaining full-size fruit.

Plant some **cool-season vegetables** such as radishes, spinach, kale, mustard and collards.

Collect herbs from your herb garden for freezing and drying. If you don't have access to a dehydrator, herbs can be dried quickly in a microwave oven. Simply place the herbs between two paper towels and heat for a minute. Remove them from the oven, cool, then test to see if the leaves are crisp. If not, return them to the microwave for a few more seconds. Store in sealed jars in a dark place so they will keep their color and flavor.

Pot up chives, parsley, and other herbs, and bring them into the house to extend the growing season.

Remove any diseased plants from the garden and burn them or bag and dispose of them to prevent spreading disease to future plants. Only compost healthy plants.

Take a tour of your own vegetable garden and **make notes** on this year's varieties, successes, challenges, and chores, so that you can learn for next year. **Make a sketch** showing the location of this year's plants to be used next spring for rotating your crops.

Continue to weed your garden to prevent the weeds from going to seed and germinating over the winter and spring.

Remove all two-year-old canes from **raspberry and blackberry plants** to reduce overwintering of

disease. Fertilizers containing potassium, phosphorus and magnesium or calcium can be applied but do not cultivate or irrigate at this time of the year.

Keep the **strawberry patch** weed free. Every weed you pull will help making weeding easier next spring.

Fall weed control around fruit trees is crucial because **weeds act as hosts to overwintering insects.**

Thanks for joining us in ***The Garden Shed —*** hope to see you again next month!

Sources:

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