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**“September Calendar”**

September is the entry into the fall gardening season. In the vegetable garden, plant green beans, sweet corn, summer squash and cucumbers by seed early in the month. There is still an opportunity to plant tomatoes if you find large transplants. It is especially desirable if you can find Surefire and/or Early Girl. They produce tennis ball-size fruit that mature quickly. Use them, and you can usually beat the cold weather.

Late in the month you can plant cole crop transplants, such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, collards and kohlrabi. Other greens that can be planted are mustard, Swiss chard and turnips. Plant your carrots, radish, lettuce, beets and rutabagas by seed.

Remember that lettuce needs to be planted on the soil surface. If you cover it with soil, it will not germinate.

Prepare your soil for the fall garden by adding 2 inches of compost and 1 cup of slow release lawn fertilizer per 50 square feet of garden. Follow the instructions on the seed packet for thinning the seeded vegetables. Plant tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussel sprouts at least 2 feet apart.

In the flower garden the zinnias, marigolds, cosmos, purslane, moss roses, penta, begonias and coleus will be decorative into November. Give them another shot of slow release lawn fertilizer to encourage new foliage and blooms.

The end of September or early October is a good time to fertilize the lawn. The fall fertilization is important, because the nutrients are stored to help with cold hardiness and a fast spring green-up. As the daylight period shortens in the month, the chemistry of the grass changes from using nutrients for immediate growth to storage mode.

Early in September, apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent germination of winter weeds. Amaze is a good selection for preventing the grasses such as annual blue grass, rescue grass and winter rye. The same formula is available in larger quantities in XL. Amaze and XL do well for the broadleaf weeds, but you may want to look for a special pre-emergent herbicide for broadleaf weeds. Look for one with “portrait” or “gallery” in the name. These prevent thistles, bedstraw, dandelions, beggars lice and other broadleaf weeds.

October and November are generally thought of as the best months to plant trees and shrubs, but September is also a good time. If you see that a shade tree or shrub needed in your landscape is on sale at the nursery, don’t hesitate to take advantage of the savings and plant them in September.

It is desirable that your fruit trees retain their foliage until November 1. The easiest way to encourage leaf retention is regular irrigation. Drip irrigation is the most efficient way to water trees and shrubs.

It is time to give your roses a limited pruning to prepare them for the fall bloom flush. Remove dead or broken stems and any stems that grow into the middle of the plant. It is most desirable if the stems all grow at a 60 degree angle from the base to the outside. Some height can be removed, but do not remove more than one third of the foliage.

Resume your spray program for the autumn after the pruning. The traditional sprays are acephate for insects and triforine for fungus. Organic gardeners can use spinosad and sulfur products.

The old fashioned roses and tough modern roses, Belinda’s Dream, Carefree Beauty and Knockout, do not require a spray program, and pruning is optional.

On the sunny patio, plant zinnias and firebush in containers if you want to attract hummingbirds during their fall migration. They will keep you entertained until late November. In the shade, use firespike and penta to attract the fascinating little birds. Supplement the nectar-producing plants with sugar water feeders. Mix one part sugar with four parts water by volume. The feeders are available at many nurseries, wild bird stores, pet supply retailers and even hardware stores and super markets. Select a feeder that is easy to clean and refill. Hang the feeder from the eaves or a trellis where the feeding birds can be observed.