

November Gardening Calendar

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November is the best month to plant shade trees and shrubs in our area. The weather is mild, we usually have enough moisture, and the plants have time to develop a root system before they are faced with the challenges of the summer weather. Among the shade tree species to consider are Texas red oak, live oak, cedar elm, Mexican sycamore, Mexican white oak, Chinese pistache, and Montezuma cypress. Anaqua is an interesting native evergreen that is slow-growing but makes a good dense shade tree that produces blooms in spring and berries in the summer that the birds love.

Dig the planting holes to the depth that the plants were growing in their container and 2 or 3 times as wide. It is not necessary to enrich the planting hole with compost or potting mix. In fact, it can be a problem in heavy soils because the water can enter the root area easier than it can drain. All the trees mentioned are well adapted for San Antonio conditions and they will survive in the native soil.

In the vegetable garden your fall tomatoes should be maturing fruit. The target is to have ripe fruit by Thanksgiving. Broccoli, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, Swiss chard and the other cole crops should be prospering. The main threat is from cabbage loopers but slugs, and snails may also be attacking the foliage. Maintain nitrogen levels by fertilizing with "winterizer" or slow release lawn fertilizer such as 18-6-12 or 19-5-9. Every 3 weeks.

November is a good time to plant spinach transplants. I plant them one foot apart but some gardeners plant them as close as 6 inches apart. Like the cabbage related vegetables, spinach and other greens also need a generous supply of nutrients. We wait to plant spinach in November because there are less likely to be hot spells that interfere with the heat sensitive spinach growth. The same issue exists with cyclamen, primula, and pansies in the flower garden. Use cyclamen and primula for spectacular color in the winter shade garden. Protect primula, pansies, and the greens from slugs and snails with slug and snail bait.

Snapdragons, stocks, dianthus, calendula and other cool weather annuals can still be planted. Zinnias from the summer will keep blooming until the first near-freezing cold spell.

November is also the recommended time to thin out iris and daylilies. Replant the extra rhizomes/bulbs about 18 inches apart.

Early in the month spray your stone fruit trees (peaches and plums) with a copper hydroxide product to help control bacterial diseases. The application may knock the leaves off the trees, but it is not a problem at this time of the year and the treatment is important. It is also not too early to plan your freeze defense tactics for cold-sensitive citrus such as Mexican lime and Meyer lemon. Late in the month move the bougainvillea, mandivilla, hibiscus, and plumeria into freeze proof shelter.

Early in the month is not too late to apply a "winterizer" fertilizer such as 18-6-12 to the lawn. The nutrients are taken up quickly by the grass and contribute to winter hardiness plus fast green-up in the spring.