

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for November

"...a man can do no better than to eat and drink, and find satisfaction in his work." -Solomon, Ecclesiastes 2:24

When I was writing *Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul*, we received a very sweet story from a nurse working in an eldercare facility. Penned on a napkin, she described their garden project for November - planting bulbs. Each person was given a specific task from digging the hole, taking the bulb out of the bag, putting the bulb in the hole, adding a scoop of bone meal, covering it with soil, and watering it. One gentleman who had difficulty understanding the directions was asked to just watch. At the end of the planting when everyone looked at their work they were confused as to why every bulb sat on top of the dirt when each person had done their job very carefully. They all looked to the man who was told to observe and questioned him. He retorted, "You told me to keep my eye on the bulb and I did just that!" Although the narrative didn't make it to the top 101 stories published, I always chuckle every November when I begin planting my bulbs.

- DIG bulbs now. Bulbs that do well in our area, including tulips, crocus, daffodils, are available in nurseries and garden centers. Dig the holes a little deeper and stack three bulbs with different blooming times for a longer show of color come spring. Plant naturalizing Narcissi six inches apart so that roots don't strangle each other or compete for water and nutrients.
- PLANT azaleas this month. If the weather is dry, make sure to keep the ground moist around the plants. Hanging begonias add a special splash of fall color to your patio.
- TAG trees that you'll want to cut down or prune heavily this winter. If you will use the wood for fires, make sure to dry it for at least a full year. Dried firewood produces 7,700 BTU of energy when burned, while green, wet wood produces 5,000 BTU.
- SCRATCH a limb to find out if a limb or branch is alive or dead. If it's green it's still alive.
- REDUCE the risk of infection from tick bites for you and your pets with Tanglefoot's new product, Tick Twister. This small device attaches to your keychain or pet's collar for safe and easy removal of ticks.
- FIX vent screens, broken foundation, and roof shakes and remove brush and wood piles from the perimeter of your house to deter mice and rats from building their winter abode.
- KEEP your heart healthy by including several of these fall harvest power foods in your meal planning: dark leafy greens, broccoli, pomegranate, and nuts. You'll get antioxidants, fiber, phytonutrients, plus calcium, magnesium, and potassium.
- CLEAN UP container plants before bringing them indoors for the winter.
- REPAIR garden tools and equipment before storing.
- WEED your garden once again, then, cover your yard with mulch. If you have a large space, consider contacting a local tree trimming service to ask for free wood chips. They are great at preventing weeds and making your garden look groomed.
- HARVEST sweet potatoes but don't rush. The longer they are in the ground, the sweeter they become. Wait until the leaves yellow and frost is near. Didn't plant any last year? Put them on your "must plant" for next season's healthy treats.
- SPICE up the Thanksgiving table by juicing your apples and adding seltzer water, nutmeg, and cinnamon for a tasty refresher.
- PICK your pumpkins and fairytale gourds for a November porch party.
- EXPLORE, experiment, and experience with the fall foliage in our luscious surroundings. Bring a bit of fall indoors.
- SALUTE the wild turkeys trotting through our neighborhoods. They have no clue what's cooking on November 22!
- THANKS to everyone for reading *Digging Deep*. Wishing you a Thanksgiving filled with the love of family, friends, and frivolity. Eat, drink, and be grateful for your work, play, and soil.

Happy Gardening to You!

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