

# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for October

*"Tickle it with a hoe and it will laugh into a harvest." – English Saying*

In primitive days before modern medicine, wise women harvested herbs, leaves, and fruits to make healing brews when people were ill. These sages were often midwives using natural curative concoctions to ease the pain and suffering of childbirth. As Christianity swept the land, it was ascertained that only men of the Church could be healers and since sickness was seen as a punishment for sins committed, these medicine women were considered to be in cohorts with the devil. The word "witch" comes from the word Wicca, meaning "Wise One" yet, soon these herbal healers became feared as evil sorcerers. When you whip up a bubbling cauldron of biological magic, remember that you are a good and godly wise witch, respecting and honoring nature to work its wonder. If you desire more treats than tricks next season, get thee into thy garden to prepare.

- **SPRINKLE** laundry detergent on sprouting mushrooms to kill them.
- **RAKE** leaves then use your lawn mower to cut them up to add to the compost bin.
- **IMPROVE** your soil before any fall planting by adding new soil, compost, fertilizer, and mulch.
- **RID** roses and mandevillas of aphids or gnats by putting cloves of garlic around the base.
- **HARVEST** the last of your tomatoes, peppers, grapes, zucchini, eggplant, and beans before the first frost.
- **HAMMER** the stems of cut flowers before placing them in a vase with water and a drop of bleach.  
By smashing the stems, they drink up the water faster and last longer.
- **PRUNE** your berry vines after you have harvested the fruit for easier picking next season.
- **MULCH** your bare ground with two or three inches of newspaper. The zinc in the ink keeps bugs away.  
Add wood chips or bark as a topper. The newspaper will decompose and can be tilled. (This is a great way to recycle your Lamorinda Weekly after reading it. It will become part of your landscape.)
- **BUY** your spring bulbs that need four to six weeks of refrigeration (tulips, for example) for planting next month.
- **PICK** any fruit that has fallen to the ground to prevent insect attraction or disease.
- **SAVE** seeds from your perennials, herbs, and vegetables by clipping the pods, drying them on a mat in the sun, or putting them in a brown paper bag. After they are dried, remove the chafe and leaves, separate out the seeds, and store in a sealed jar with a label.
- **KEEP** insects out of your houseplants by dumping pencil shavings into the container. Mothballs work also against moths and caterpillars.
- **GIVE** your potted patio plants a calcium bath by crushing eggshells in a bucket, adding water and letting it sit for two hours. Pour into the pots.
- **DEADHEAD** roses, annuals, and perennials to extend the blooms.
- **MOVE** containers to the shade as Indian summer shines brightest.
- **PLACE** three matchsticks into the holes you dig when planting fall flowers.  
The sulphur kills insects and enriches the soil.
- **BUY** trees boasting autumn colors now.
- **CHECK** around your house for fire hazards and flammable materials.  
This is a dry year and October is traditionally the worst fire month.
- **AERATE** and fertilize grass. Raise the blades on mowers.
- **TRANSPLANT** calendulas, Iceland poppies, dianthus, forget-me-nots, primroses, Shasta daisies, agapanthus, and daylilies.
- **CAN** or freeze your extra harvest of fruit and vegetables to enjoy in the cold of winter.
- **PLUCK** the florets on your herbs, such as garlic chives, basil, mint, and other flowering herbs.
- **USE** the colorful leaves from autumn trees such as Japanese maple, liquid amber, or grapes to create a beautiful fall display.
- **CARVE** pumpkins with happy faces or make funny jack o'lanterns. Roast the seeds and pack them for school lunches.
- **RESEED** old lawns now for the fastest, healthiest growth or fill in bare spots with blue star creeper, isotoma.
- **CAST** a healthy spell on your little wizards, warlords, and witches with a pitcher of fresh pressed apple cider.

Happy Harvest. Happy Halloween Haunting. Happy Gardening and Growing.

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Cynthia is available as a speaker and consultant.



*Aphids attacking a mandevilla. Add cloves of garlic or spray with soap.*



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## New Tree Planting

Think of the tree you just purchased as a lifetime investment. How well your tree, and investment, grows depends on the type of tree and location you select for planting, the care you provide when the tree is planted, and follow-up care the tree receives after planting.

The ideal time to plant trees and shrubs is during the dormant season—in the fall after their leaves drop or early spring before bud breaks. Weather conditions are cool and allow plants to establish roots in the new location. The proper handling during planting is essential to ensure a healthy future for new trees and shrubs.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you find your perfect tree.

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