

## Cynthia Brian's October Gardening Guide

The next two months are busy ones in the garden as we prepare our beds for a winter's sleep. Chrysanthemums, belladonna lilies, and pelargoniums are in full bloom, a certain beacon of the blazing fall colors to follow.

**FERTILIZE** lawns during the rain for faster absorption. Don't forget to re-seed during these wet days as well.

**PULL** any weeds you find in your garden before they develop seed heads.

**CUT** cattails for an autumn arrangement. Every part of the cattail is edible, too.

**COLLECT** abandoned bird nests to add to holiday décor.

**REPAIR** birdhouses so that overwintering birds such as bluebirds, chickadees, and nuthatches will have a warm, safe, cozy place to rest during the upcoming cold nights.

**INCREASE** bird feeders in your yard as birds consume more food in fall and winter.

**TUNE** up your garden by pruning back overgrown shrubs.

**DIG** and divide iris rhizomes now. Make sure to keep a few inches of the leaves on the stems and bury the roots 2 inches deep, 18 to 20 inches apart.

**FORCE** your final produce to ripen by halting watering.

**PRUNE** berry bushes, including summer raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries by removing dead canes. Thin any new forming canes.

**AMEND** your hard clay soil with large amounts of compost.

**MULCH** with wood chips to prevent erosion and maintain temperate soil temperatures.

**FREEZE** or can your vine tomatoes before the rains rot them.

**PROPAGATE** perennials through root cuttings.

**SAVE** seeds from your favorite annuals, herbs, and vegetables by gathering, drying, labeling, and storing.

**HARVEST** the remainder of ripe produce before the end of the month-apples, Asian pears, peppers, Swiss chard.

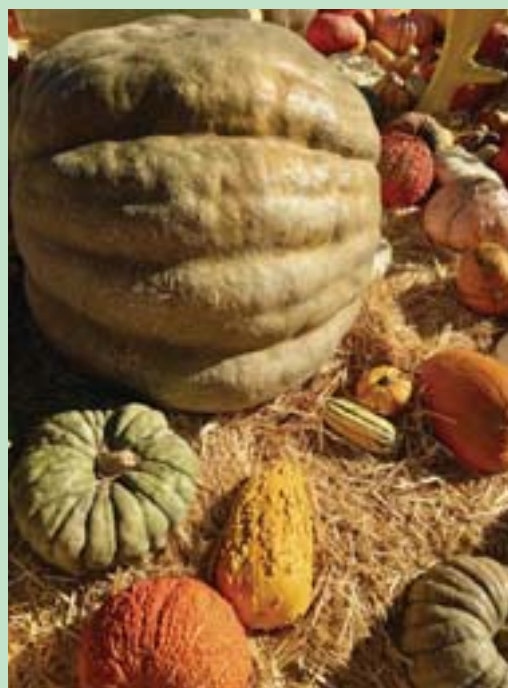
**ROAST** seeds from squash and pumpkins by first cleaning, drying, soaking in salted water, then, baking at 375 degrees until golden brown. What a healthy snack!

Fingers crossed that this October will be disaster-free. Whatever transpires, in the freshness of fall, we'll start anew.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



Belladonna lilies bring a lightness to the landscape.



A variety of fall pumpkins and gourds.



Magenta pelargonium blooms.