

SEPTEMBER GARDENING TIPS

from UT GARDENS



This month, our guest contributor to Chris' Corner is Horticulturist Jason Reeves from the UT Gardens in Jackson, TN.

Jason Reeves, Research Horticulturist with the UT Gardens in Jackson, lists these tips and tasks for gardening in September:

- Begin planting cabbage, kale and pansies in the latter part of the month.
- Apply a preemergent herbicide on your lawn to control cool-season weeds such as chickweed, henbit, dead nettle and annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*).
- Keep an eye out for pests on your pumpkins, gourds, squash and melons. Cucumber beetles and squash bugs can be controlled with Sevin. Harvest your pumpkins when their color deepens and skin yields very little to pressure. Wash the fruits in a weak bleach solution and store in a cool, dry location until you are ready to display them.
- To ensure proper maturity, hard-shelled gourds such as dipper, birdhouse and swan should be left on the vine until the vine starts to die back.
- Divide and repot any tropicals you have outdoors to prepare them for their winter home. Hose off or wash plants with soapy water and inspect them for insects. If needed, treat them with an appropriate insecticide. Imidacloprid, the active ingredient in many of the new insecticides, is a good systemic for insect control. It can be mixed with water and poured on the soil and the plant will take it up. Collect seed heads and pods on plants like okra, sumac, cotton, coneflower, rose hips and other suitable materials for dried arrangements. Air-dry in a dark, well ventilated cool location.
- If you have had disease problem with any of the vegetables in your garden, remove and dispose of the plant materials properly. Do not add these to the compost pile. Many diseases will over-winter on infected leaves, stems and fruit. This is especially important with tomatoes.
- Avoid the temptation to plant seasonal pot mums in your landscape. Even if they establish themselves, they rarely live up to your expectations the following year. It is best to just toss them onto the compost pile after

they fade. Chrysanthemum 'Clara Curtis' and 'Sheffield Pink' are good reliable cultivars that will be around for years to come.

- Order or purchase bulbs by Oct. 1 for availability of the best selections. Store them in a cool, dry location until you plant them. Colchicums and fall-blooming crocus should be planted as soon as they arrive.
- Keep deadheading plants such as tithonia, zinnia and cosmos to ensure that they continue to flower.
- Continue collecting annual and perennial seeds that you wish to sow next year. Freshly collected seed is best stored in a paper bag or envelope until thoroughly dried.
- Allow plants to finish the summer growth cycle in a normal manner. Never encourage new growth with heavy applications of fertilizer or excessive pruning this late in the season. Plant will not properly harden off and new growth can be injured by an early freeze.
- Fall webworms starting appearing in pecan, walnut, persimmon trees in mid- to late-August. Controlling the bottom 1/3 of the tree will be quite effective, even though we cannot reach the upper areas. The liquid form of carbaryl (Sevin, etc.) is a good product for this. An organic insecticide containing Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) will also work.
- Start planning any fall and winter hardscape projects. Fall is a pleasant time to work with stone.

Jason Reeves is a Horticulturist and Research Associate at the West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center in Jackson. The UT Gardens located in Knoxville and Jackson is part of the University Of Tennessee Institute Of Agriculture. Their mission is to foster appreciation, education and stewardship of plants through garden displays, collections, educational programs and research trials. The gardens are open during all seasons and free to the public. See <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/> and <http://westtennessee.tennessee.edu/ornamentals/> for more information.

I want to personally thank Jason for this great information! For more information, contact Jason Reeves at jreeves@utk.edu. Until next time, happy gardening!



Christopher Conner