

September Gardening Calendar

It is time to prepare your roses for their fall bloom period. Remove all dead stems and any branches blocking paths. The middles can be opened up by removing some internal stems, and the height reduced by one-third. Fertilize each plant with one cup of slow release lawn fertilizer. Protect the plants from insects with an acephate or spinosad based spray. Use a fungicide with triforine for black spot.

If you have trouble with winter weeds apply a pre-emergent herbicide to the lawn. The winter weeds include annual bluegrass, rescue grass, thistle, dandelion, beggars' lice, and bedstraw. Dimension and Amaze are 2 herbicides that will work to prevent the germination of both weed grasses and broadleaf weeds if they are applied early in the month according to label questions.

Lawn grass changes its growth characteristics in the fall. Instead of translating water and nutrients into new grass blades, the materials are used to reorganize the plant's chemistry to provide cold tolerance and a fast start for the spring lawn. It may mean less mowing in the fall. For St Augustine grass it also means a susceptibility to brown patch. If you over water the lawn in the fall it may result in patches of the fungal disease. The initial infections start in low spots in the lawn where it stays slightly soggy after rains or irrigation.

To prevent brown patch, reduce watering and only water in the morning. Recognize the disease as rounded brown areas that are spreading. The disease does not kill the roots but attacks the blades at the plant base. Lawn fungicides labeled for brown patch will usually stop the spread the disease, but healing may not occur until spring.

September is a great month for butterflies. Many of their favorite nectar sources including mistflower, zinnias, porter weed, milkweed, and duranta are blooming. The purple martins(predators) are on their way to South America and the weather is still warm. Monarchs will visit our landscapes as they head south for the winter and they will be joined by queens, gulf fritillaries, giant swallowtails, black swallowtails, tiger swallowtails, and other colorful species.

The migrating hummingbirds should start moving through San Antonio in September. They will visit the zinnias and other nectar producing blooms. Bring them onto the patio for observation by offering sugar water in a feeder. They also are attracted to firebush and pentas in containers.

Peaches and plums will bear their fruit next spring on new growth from this growing season. If they have put on at least 18 inches of growth this summer, they are ready for action next spring. If not, fertilize them now with some slow release or winterizer lawn fertilizer (1 cup/ inch of diameter). They will put on more growth in September and October.

September is the month to plant most of our winter vegetable garden. Prepare the soil by incorporating 2 inches of compost and 10 cups of slow-release lawn fertilizer into every 100 sq. ft of bed. Plant broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and Swiss chard by transplants. Use seed for turnips, carrots, radishes, rutabaga, beets, English peas, and lettuce. Remember that the lettuce seed must be spread on the surface of the soil for it to germinate. If it is covered with soil it won't germinate. Wait to plant spinach and onion transplants later in the fall.

It is best if you have had your fall tomatoes in the ground since July or early August, but you might beat the cold weather if you find some large transplants at the nursery. Fertilize the tomatoes in your garden with lawn fertilizer and keep them well watered.

Okra and peppers should be in full production over the month. Keep them harvested.