



Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening, Inc.

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Greetings,

With all the warm temperatures, the array of bloom in my garden (and yours!) is continuing longer than usual this fall.

What's Blooming in My Garden Now?

Looking out my door, I enjoy the soft salmon color of the 'Sheffield' chrysanthemum, taller than expected this year due to frequent rainfall. This is one of those old style mums with a loose habit and long stems for cutting.



Sheffield Mums

I have another old-fashioned mum that will wait until mid-November to open, a pale yellow and cream daisy flower with a loose habit, from my grandmother's garden in Bolton, Connecticut. Our family has always used these flowers for Thanksgiving decorations. On a recent buying trip down that way, I brought back some Mammoth type mums to try. These are old-style mums in bright colors that will reach 3' in height next year.



New Fall Mum to Try

Along the driveway where the heat can be intense in summer, ornamental alliums do well. The last to bloom just opened, *Allium thunbergii* 'Ozawa'. Its intense violet-purple color is welcome among the colorful maple leaves that are beginning to settle around it.



Fall Blooming Allium

A few years ago I happened upon the white form of this plant, and a clump of it is lighting up the edge of a bed in dappled shade.

Tall *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail' has been blooming for a long time now, since late June! The crimson red spikes looked great near the heliopsis and phlox. Now I enjoy it above the allium.



Callicarpa (Beautyberry)

As I make my rounds, other beauties to behold include the plumes of ornamental grasses and the purple berries of the genus *Callicarpa*, one of those cutback shrubs that finally

comes into its glory at this time of year. Also look for yellow and orange berried forms of the winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*.

Tips for End-of-Season Clean-Up

We start fall clean up gradually, enjoying the late blooming plants and crisp, cool air. Getting your garden ready for the oncoming

winter dormancy period is a task that deserves as much care and attention as is given to garden maintenance in the spring and summer. If done properly, spring cleanup will be made much easier.

Your garden will be a food source for wildlife

throughout the winter, while

plant diseases and pests will be kept in check.



Asters

Here is a checklist of important tasks we like to keep in mind:

- Pull out spent annuals and compost them.
- Cut back perennials to the ground. Make sure you remove all material that is diseased or contains pests. You may want to consider leaving select plants such as sedums, hellebores, liriopse, Christmas fern, and Yucca for winter interest. When the winter sets in you will really appreciate being able to see some green color and interesting texture. Plants like Rudbeckia, coneflower, astilbe, and ornamental grasses not only have interesting seed heads but they also provide food and cover for birds and overwintering butterflies.
- Decide what is "winter interest." This tends to be a matter of preference. Some view dried perennials as unsightly, while others think them attractive. Please let us know if there are any plants you would like us to leave up for "winter interest."
- Dig and harvest all vegetables before the frost gets them. Some root vegetables such as leeks, parsnips, turnips, and carrots may be left in the ground and harvested later. Mulch with straw to make digging easier.
- Rake up and compost leaves to deter pests and diseases that overwinter on debris. Some leaves are beneficial and can act as a protective winter mulch. But too many leaves can cause heavy matting without proper air circulation. We offer leaf shredding to create an ideal natural mulch. Also remove any rotting fruit from the ground in veggie gardens and under fruiting trees.
- If you don't already have compost bins or a compost pile, now is the time to make one! Brown leaves make a great addition to the compost pile.



Leaf Shredding



Did you know that Pumpkin Brook can build compost bins for you?

E-mail [Carmin](mailto:Carmin@pumpkinbrook.com) for more information.

- Dig up bulbs that are not winter hardy such as dahlias, gladiolus, and cannas and store them in a cool dry, place. [We can store them for you if you prefer.](#)
- Empty clay and ceramic containers and store indoors to prevent winter damage and cracking.
- Drain garden hoses and store indoors to prevent cracking from freezing.
- Clean up your garage or shed so that you are organized for spring. Clean, sharpen, and oil tools to prevent rusting.

Fall Services: Leaf Shredding & Brush Chipping

Leaf Shredding

In the fall as weather permits, we clean up and shred autumn leaves with our leaf shredder. The shredded leaves can then be spread in planting beds as mulch, either now or else stockpiled on site for next spring. We usually cover the pile to prevent excessive decomposition over the winter.

The leaves are rich in nutrients and have a uniform appearance. They decompose within a year and assist in building soil structure. This practice effectively recycles the leaves on site, and closes the waste loop. Many clients thus avoid disposal costs and the cost of purchasing mulch.



Leaves Being Pulled into the Shredder

This is a very lovely look in a woodland garden. Another strategy is to "leave the leaves" in your woodland area for winter protection of the plants, then rake out in early spring for shredding and immediate re-mulching of the beds.

Brush chipping

Clearing up neglected areas, extensive pruning, or storm damage may cause accumulation of brush, which will be costly to transport for disposal. We offer on-site brush chipping services. In many cases, the wood chips can be re-used on site for a variety of purposes.

Benefits of wood chips:

- High in nitrogen
- The best natural fertilizer for woody plants
- Suppress weeds when applied as mulch
- Make natural pathways in woodland areas

We often mix the new chips with compost as a topdressing around woody plants. This buffers the release of nitrogen over time and promotes more rapid decomposition of the material.

If we haven't scheduled you yet for these services, please e-mail [Priscilla](#) today.

October Is the Time For:

- Bulb planting once soil temperatures have cooled to 55 degrees
- Transplanting shrubs and perennials - last call!
- Cutting back peony foliage to prevent fungal disease transmission through the soil
- Removing leaves from lawns and at least a layer from beds
- Shredding leaves for a natural mulch (see article)
- Making notes about additions and changes to next year's garden
- Checking arborvitae to be sure branches don't splay out in snow/ice season; prune back long tips and tie key branches with arborvitae



Spring Bulbs

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See also our article on [Tips for End-of-Season Clean-up!](#)

I really enjoy "putting gardens to bed." It's a great time to reflect on the year that has just passed in the garden while spending some time outside before the long winter sets in.

Sincerely,
Priscilla

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