

## Horticultural Points of Interest – October 2016

- **Planting Spring Bulbs**
  - Planting Time
    - Mid-October to Mid-November for Zone 6
    - October for Zone 5
    - Applying Bulb Tone or equivalent after planting is Helpful
      - Bone meal is not so helpful and can attract Animal Pests
  - Critters and New Bulbs
    - Some bulbs such as tulips, grape hyacinths, crocus and others may need protection from squirrels and chipmunks after planting
      - Plant with lots of pepper, a commercial product such as Critter Ridder or cover with hardware cloth until the ground freezes
- **Planting Trees and Shrubs**
  - Many Nurseries offer discounts at this time of year
  - October through much of November are prime times to plant Trees and Shrubs
    - Evergreen Trees and Shrubs grow best if they are in the ground by the end of October
    - Considering the Drought, water thoroughly and before putting the plant in the Hole as well, if soil is dusty at Depth
- **Fall Garden Shut Down**
  - Decorative Seed heads can be left in place depending on personal Taste
  - Trim Flower Stems or Don't Trim Flower Stems
    - Plants susceptible to Crown rot should not be trimmed back
      - Stems wick water out of the Crown Region & protect Crown
        - Xeric plants in General
      - Usually recommended that Epimediums are left in place until early spring
      - In many cases Stems are Hollow & if cut short water goes down into the Crown through the hollow Stems (Bee Balm and others)
        - Stems are usually solid at leaf Axils, so does not happen with adequate stem lengths
    - Irises should be cut off low to Ground
      - Particularly Bearded and other rhizomatous Irises
      - Iris borers lay eggs on the leaves
        - Cutting them off and disposing of the leaves as well as plant debris around the irises helps prevent the borers
    - Shrubs like Blue Mist Shrub and Butterfly bushes are best left with stems 3' long
      - Longer length leaves more buds in place to open in spring & improves winter survival
      - Cut back after substantial bud growth in spring
    - Cut off Stems of Perennials like Penstemons that Produce clumps of basal leaves in Late Summer
    - Cut off and dispose of plant material that shows disease

- **Leaves and Pine Needles**

- Don't Give away or Burn
- Shred and use as Top Dressing on Gardens particularly for Woodland or Perennial Gardens
  - Great for the Garden & Improves the Soil
  - Can Combine with Compost as a top Dressing
- Many Leaf Blowers will also Vacuum up and Shred Leaves
- Exception: If Voles are a Problem, do NOT Cover the bed with Leaves.
  - Voles feel Protected by the leaf Cover and will do considerable more damage with that cover in place
    - Instead clean surface debris out of the bed and compost the shredded leaves elsewhere for use in the Spring
    - Note: Vole damage consists of shallow or surface tunnels from which they eat the roots of your perennials

- **Winterize Shrubs & Trees**

- Evergreens
  - Often Damaged or Killed by Desiccation rather than by the Cold
    - Water Thoroughly before the ground freezes
      - Especially important for newly planted Evergreens
      - Despite recent Rain we are still about 10" below Normal
        - Foundation plantings tend to dry out easily and must not be forgotten
    - Spray or not spray with anti-desiccants such as Wilt Pruf or No Wilt
      - There is now some Question about these as they reduce Transpiration and Photosynthesis if both sides of Leaves are coated
        - Spray tops only (?)
        - Cover key Shrubs with Burlap
          - Use 3 or 4 poles to avoid breaking Branches
    - Protect Against against Deer
      - Broadleaved Evergreens definitely on the Menu for Deer
        - Rhododendrons, Mountain Laurels, Most Hollies
      - Commercial Repellents Expensive but some are Very Effective
      - Field Evaluations indicate most Effective Repellents by far are those that emit Sulfurous Odors (Rotten Egg Based)
        - Deer Away, Liquid Fence, etc
        - Spraying in Conjunction with Wilt Pruf or No Wilt prolongs life of Repellent by Retarding wash off by Rain
      - Scented bath Soap may help but tests show to be not as effective as Sulfurous Repellents
- Small Trees and Larger Shrubs
  - Wrap Trunks to Prevent Rabbit and Vole Damage and Splitting of the Bark by Winter Sun
    - Inexpensive Spiral Plastic Wrap available at most Garden Shops