

## Fall is for Planting!

On Saturdays in the fall, many of us enjoy working in our gardens in addition to cheering on our favorite team. As the temperatures continue to drop and the rains become more frequent, fall gardening gets exciting. Whether you are planting new shrubs and trees or dividing existing plant material, fall is a great time to complete many landscape chores.

This is a great time to plant new shrubs and trees and also to replace those that were lost due to the excessive summer heat. One of the most important things to remember is to select healthy plant material for planting. Don't get caught trying to 'revive' an unhealthy shrub just because it was discounted. Besides, garden centers usually have a wide selection of ornamental plants at this time. Remember, healthy white roots will produce a healthy plant.

Prepare your new bed area by tilling in potting soil and organic matter. This will allow for water retention while also having adequate drainage. Always dig a wide hole to allow for proper root growth. Planting this time of year usually requires less water and gives plants time to set roots before spring. You may have to wait until mid-winter if you want to plant balled & burlap (B&B) or bare-root (BR) plants. This would cover most large shade and fruit trees.

Planting annuals and perennials is a great way to add color in the landscape! Some of the most popular cool season annuals are pansies, snapdragons, and ornamental cabbage and kale. These have a wide range of colors to choose from to match any landscape. Chrysanthemums and pansies are blooming now and providing mass displays of color.

Cabbage and kale can also be found at local nurseries right now. Fall is the ideal time to plant spring-flowering bulbs, like tulips, daffodils, and hyacinth. Remember to plant the bulb twice as deep as the bulb's diameter. Some bulbs may need to be chilled before planting, so be sure to ask your local landscape professional.

It is not recommended to fertilize ornamentals until early spring, so to prevent any new growth from being frozen. Early March is a better time to do this landscape chore. Treating your turf with a weed-preventer now will help to control winter weeds, but be sure the product is labeled for your turf type.

Fall is also a great time for general cleanup since sanitation is the key to a healthy landscape. Pick up any fallen or discarded fruit from under the trees and mow the area. Prune any dead, diseased, or unwanted limbs at this time, but leave any severe pruning until early spring. Good luck and get growing!

If you have any questions, please contact your local county Extension office at (662) 328-2111 or visit our website at <http://msucare.com>.

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