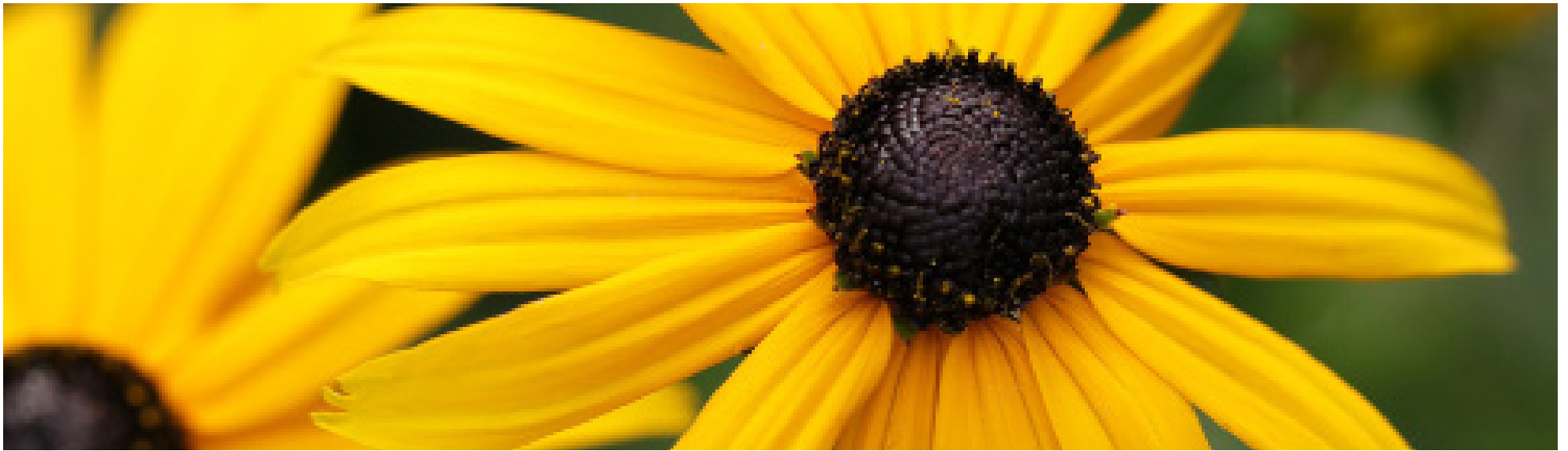


Monthly Tips & Tasks

A Gardening Guide for Maryland Communities



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

 **HOME & GARDEN**
INFORMATION CENTER

MASTER
GARDENER 

For answers to your yard and garden questions, visit Ask Extension at go.umd.edu/AskExtension.

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JANUARY Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

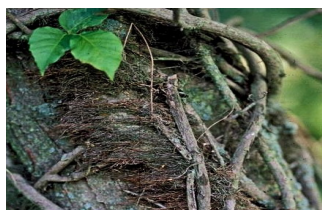
- Order fruit plants online now for early spring planting.
- Check planting instructions on seed packets to avoid planting seeds too early!
- Don't rely on windowsill light if you're starting seeds indoors.

Indoor Plants

- Cut back on fertilizing indoor plants unless they have artificial lighting.
- Don't store firewood inside; bark beetles and other insects may emerge in your home!

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Sweep off snow from trees & shrubs to prevent branch breakage.
- Prune damaged or diseased tree branches, but avoid poison ivy vines!
- Destroy bagworm bags & spotted lanternfly egg masses.



Watch for poison ivy vine (Ohio State Weed Lab)



Destroy bagworm bags



Destroy spotted lanternfly egg masses

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Grow your own fruit this year! Blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, figs, & pawpaws are easier to maintain without pesticides compared to apples, pears, & peaches. The more food you grow locally, the more you help to reduce climate-warming gas emissions associated with food transportation, packaging, & storage.



Grow figs locally



Try growing strawberries this year

December 2022

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JANUARY 2023

February 2023

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FEBRUARY Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Build a raised bed with topsoil & leaf compost.
- Seeds for onions, broccoli, & cabbage can be started indoors.
- Buy fresh seed with resistance to diseases that have been a problem in your garden.

Indoor Plants

- It's time to start fertilizing your indoor plants!
- Place your indoor plants in a sunny spot & be sure not to overwater to avoid leaf yellowing & leaf drop.

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- If you notice dead stems or branches on your shrubs, check for signs of voles. To learn more, check out HGIC's "Voles" webpage.
- Limit the use of salt to melt ice & snow. Salt & other deicer products can damage landscape plants & pollute surface water.



Climate Resiliency Tip!

Plant native plants. Native plants are adapted to Maryland's climate & soils, require less watering & fertilizer once established, provide habitat for wildlife -- & they're beautiful! Start small. Replace a portion of lawn with native plants or grow a few in containers on a deck or balcony.



January 2023

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FEBRUARY 2023

March 2023

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NOTES

MARCH Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- If you haven't tested the soil in your vegetable garden in 3 or more years, test your soil & mix 1 inch of compost into your beds.
- Cut back last year's herb plants to make room for new growth.

Indoor Plants

- Start fertilizing your indoor plants if you haven't already!
- Repot & divide indoor plants using lightweight, well-drained soilless potting mixes.

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Begin planting trees & shrubs now.
- Cut old perennial flower stalks to varying heights between 8 to 24 inches. The remaining stems provide nesting sites for native bees that pollinate plants.
- Add 1 inch of compost to beds, pull weeds & apply 2 inches of mulch to prevent weeds.



Test your soil



Repot indoor plants



Plant trees & shrubs

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Rethink fertilizer. It takes a great deal of fossil-fuel energy to produce synthetic nitrogen fertilizers. Test your soil before using fertilizer. Switch to organic sources, leave grass clippings on the lawn to cycle nutrients, use compost on garden beds & cover crops in a vegetable garden. Natural materials add nutrients!



Leave grass clippings



Add compost to beds

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MARCH 2023

April 2023

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APRIL Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- “Harden-off” transplants one week prior to transplanting to ready them for outdoor conditions.
- Finish planting fruit trees & small fruits.



Begin planting small fruits

Indoor Plants

- Groom indoor plants by removing dead & diseased foliage or flowers & gently dust the leaves with a soft rag.
- Periodically place plants in the shower to give them a good drink of water.



Groom indoor plants

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Remove spent flowers from spring bulbs but leave the green foliage until it dies back naturally.
- Continue planting trees & shrubs until the end of June.
- It's the start of lawn mowing season. “Mowing high” (3”-4” for tall fescue) reduces weeds.



Mow high this season

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Grow a food garden. Enjoy delicious produce, save money, & reduce climate-warming gas emissions associated with transportation of store-bought foods. No sunny space at home? Join a community garden! Collaborate with others to share plants, seeds, & tools. Compost garden waste & use water conservation practices like drip irrigation.



Grow a food garden



Join a community garden

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APRIL 2023

May 2023

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MAY Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Begin setting out transplants of warm-season crops like tomatoes, but be ready to cover plants in case of frost.
- Start spreading mulch around plants to reduce weeds. Dried grass clippings & leaves can be used.



Indoor Plants

- Move your indoor plants outdoors after the last frost. Choose a shady spot for the first two weeks to gradually introduce them to more sunlight.



Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Plant a variety of flowering annuals & perennials, including native plants, for a succession of blooms over the entire growing season to support pollinators.
- Summer annual bulbs like gladiolus, caladium & dahlias can be planted now.



Climate Resiliency Tip!

Stop using gas-powered yard tools. Gas-powered mowers, blowers, & weed trimmers, as well as synthetic fertilizers & herbicides, all contribute to climate-warming gas emissions. Use a reel mower, rake, & hand pruners for yard maintenance. Replace some lawn with other groundcovers that do not require mowing.



MAY 2023

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NOTES

JUNE Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Keep an eye out for flea beetles on eggplants, potatoes, tomatoes, & cabbage.
- Young tomato plants can have leaf spot diseases; remove badly infected leaves & put in the trash - do not compost.
- Avoid overhead watering to reduce disease.

Indoor Plants

- Monitor indoor plants for mealybugs, spider mites, aphids, whitefly & scale insects. A few pests can be removed by hand or by spraying with water. A large population may require spraying infested plants with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap.

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Water your newly planted trees & shrubs regularly for about two years, especially in the summer & fall.
- Add a 2-3 inch layer of mulch around your trees & shrubs, but be sure to keep mulch away from the trunk or stem.



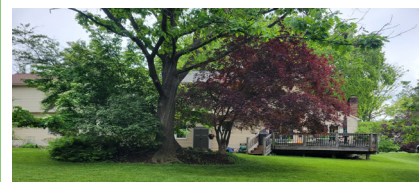
Monitor for flea beetles (M. Legg)



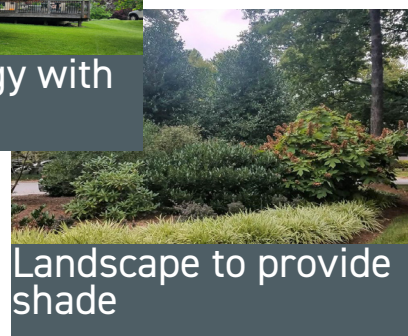
Check plants for aphids

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Choose plants for energy conservation. Well-placed trees, shrubs, & vines can provide shade to cool your living space in the summer, or block strong winds in the winter - saving you money on energy bills. Shade A/C units, patios, & rooftops from high summer heat. Plants store carbon, so this is a win for the climate & you too!



Conserve energy with plants



Landscape to provide shade

JUNE 2023

May 2023

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JULY

Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Sow seeds for fall transplants of broccoli, kale, turnip, & cauliflower in flats or containers. Squash, beans, & cucumbers can be direct sown into your garden.



Indoor Plants

- Continue to fertilize indoor plants throughout the summer.

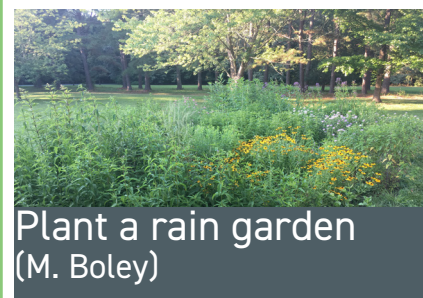
Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Mulch your landscape now if you haven't already. Mulch reduces weeds & conserves soil moisture.
- Monitor & destroy spotted lanternfly adults & report any sightings to the Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- Patrol your landscape for mosquito breeding sites & Japanese beetles. Remember to always perform a tick check after spending time outdoors!



Climate Resiliency Tip!

Too much or too little rain? Climate change brings more variable & severe weather - heavier rainfall events, or periods of drought. Rain gardens, rain barrels, conservation landscaping, & stream buffers are options to minimize flooding & erosion. In droughts, drip irrigation or soaker hoses help to conserve water.



JULY 2023

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AUGUST

Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Pick tomatoes when they first change color & ripen them on your kitchen counter.
- Harvest & preserve tarragon, rosemary, basil, sage & other herbs.
- Tidy your garden by disposing of any rotten or dropped fruits & foliage to reduce diseases & insects next season.



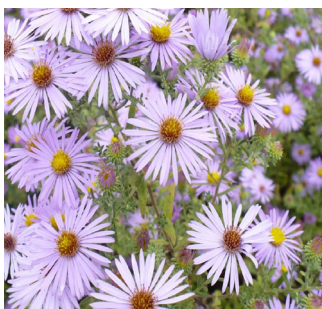
Ripen tomatoes indoors

Indoor Plants

- Did you know some houseplants can be propagated from leaf cuttings? Try it with African violets or Begonia.

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Late August through September is the perfect time to plant perennials.
- Keep newly planted trees, shrubs, & perennials hydrated by watering during dry periods.
- Avoid mowing during extremely dry & hot weather since the cut ends can allow moisture to escape.



Plant perennials

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Grow native plants, remove invasive ones. Native plants provide habitat & food for good insects, butterflies, birds, & other wildlife which bring beauty & have critical functions like pollination, seed production, decomposition, & nutrient cycling. Remove & avoid buying invasive plants - they outcompete the native ones.



Grow native plants



Remove invasive plants

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AUGUST 2023

September 2023

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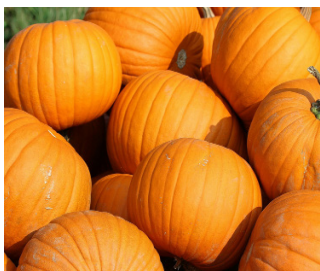
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NOTES

SEPTEMBER Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Pick full-size green tomatoes from plants losing foliage to diseases. They can be brought indoors to ripen.
- Harvest pumpkins & winter squashes when the rind hardens. Gently cut them from the vine leaving a 4-5 in handle & store in a cool, dry place.



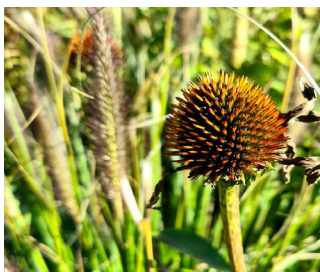
Harvest pumpkins

Indoor Plants

- When moving plants from outdoors to indoors, check for pests such as mealybugs. They can be managed with insecticidal soap.
- Be careful not to overwater houseplants as they adjust to being back indoors.

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

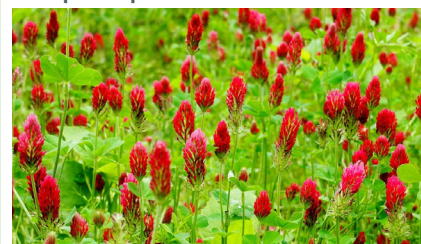
- Leave seedheads of perennials for birds to feed on.
- Apply lawn fertilizer in the fall & fertilize according to the UME fertilizer schedule.
- Wait to prune trees & shrubs until later in the fall & winter.



Leave seedheads

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Plant a cover crop. In a food garden, cover bare ground in the fall with oats, winter rye or wheat, or crimson clover. These “living mulches” provide protection from weeds & erosion & improve soil by adding nutrients & organic matter. This benefits your next crop of plants & the environment!



Plant crimson clover as a winter cover crop



Use buckwheat as a summer cover crop

August 2023

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SEPT EMBER 2023

October 2023

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NOTES

OCTOBER

Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Lettuce, spinach, arugula, & kale can be planted through mid-October if covered to re-grow in the spring.



Cover greens

Indoor Plants

- Going indoor plant shopping soon? Check for signs of insects & disease! Look for healthy, growing foliage, white or tan (not brown) roots, & that the roots are able to hold the soil without being root-bound.



Inspect roots before buying

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Save seeds from flowering plants to be planted next spring.
- Daffodil bulbs, alliums, & other spring-flowering bulbs can be planted now. Plant them in a sunny spot with well-drained soil.
- Leave plant stalks standing for beneficial insects to use as winter shelter.



Plant spring bulbs

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Reduce & compost food waste. About one third of all food produced never gets eaten. Food waste dumped in landfills generates climate warming gasses as it decomposes without oxygen. Making compost at home or burying food scraps in garden soil are solutions.



Reduce food waste



Compost (P. Dennison)

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OCTOBER 2023

November 2023

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NOVEMBER

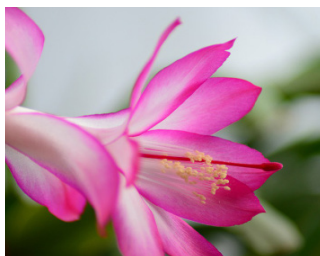
Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- If you didn't plant a cover crop, add organic matter into your garden beds by using compost to improve soil & shredded leaves to minimize the risk of soil erosion & nutrient run-off.

Indoor Plants

- During periods of slow indoor plant growth, allow most of the soil to dry out since wet soil causes root rot.
- Thanksgiving & Christmas cacti are popular indoor plants for flowers during the holiday season. They can last for many years with good care.



Care for your thanksgiving cactus

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

- Mulch your perennials after the first hard freeze to moderate soil temperature fluctuations.
- Dig up summer bulbous & tuberous plants to store them indoors for the winter. Search "bulbs" on HGIC for information about storing bulbs.



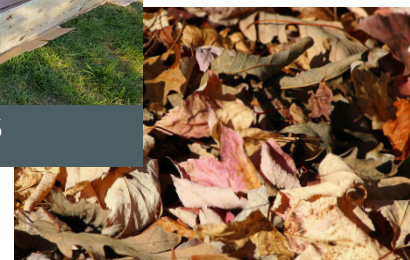
Dig up & store summer bulbs

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Improve soil with no-till or low-till gardening. Keep the ground covered with a mixture of plants & avoid disturbing your soil as much as possible. Smother weeds or turf (rather than digging) to prepare a new garden bed. Add compost to your soil. Fall leaves can be composted & used as mulch. Good soil grows healthier plants!



Smother weeds



Use fall leaves as mulch

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NOVEMBER 2023

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NOTES

DECEMBER

Yard & Garden Tips & Tasks

Food Garden

- Visit the Maryland Grows Blog article “How to Choose a Seed Catalog” for tips on choosing which seeds to purchase.

Indoor Plants

- An amaryllis bulb is a popular holiday gift & with proper care, they can bloom again. Check out HGIC's “Amaryllis Care” webpage for tips!
- To keep poinsettias healthy, keep them away from dry, drafty locations & make sure water can drain away from the roots.



Enjoy amaryllis & poinsettias as holiday gifts

Trees, Shrubs, & Flowers

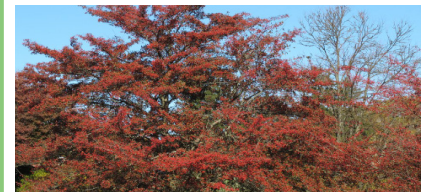
- Evergreens like hollies, boxwoods, & pines can be pruned for holiday decorating.
- Examine boxwood wreaths & decorations for symptoms of boxwood blight before purchasing.
- If the weather has been dry, water young & newly planted trees & shrubs until the ground freezes.



Decorate with evergreens

Climate Resiliency Tip!

Plant a tree or support local tree planting. Trees have so many benefits! They provide shading, cooling, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, & stormwater absorption. Maryland is aiming to plant 5 million native trees by 2031. Plant your own tree, volunteer to care for one, or support forest conservation. Be a tree steward!



Plant a tree in your landscape



Support a local tree planting

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DECEMBER 2023

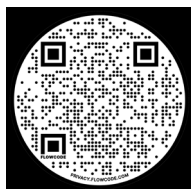
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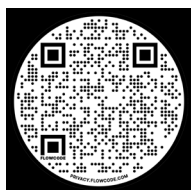


The Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC) develops and delivers science-based, sustainable gardening and integrated pest management education for better human and environmental health.

go.umd.edu/hgic



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION



The University of Maryland Extension Master Gardener Program trains volunteer horticultural educators to support the University of Maryland Extension mission by educating residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.

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