

Autumn is a fantastic time to get into the garden and get planting!

The weather is cooling down but the ground is still warm which means it's the perfect time to plant. Autumn's lovely warm days and cool nights allow new plants to grow and establish their root systems before winter arrives.

There are many more jobs to be done at this time of year.....

Maples

Look out for the fabulous autumn coloured foliage from maples in your local area. These gorgeous trees with their natural elegance make sensational feature trees and are perfect for courtyards and slightly sheltered gardens. They need some protection from wind, harsh afternoon sun and reflected heat but planted in the right spot they provide a sensational highlight to any garden.

GardenTasks

It's time to take advantage of the slow growing time and thoroughly weed your garden. Make sure you follow up with renewing your mulch & you'll reduce the amount of weeding you'll need to do further down the track.

- To ensure your roses are well nourished during winter - apply a good organic rose fertilizer during autumn.
- Empty compost bins and use compost to enrich your soil - this will also allow room for the mountains of autumn leaves soon to come.
- Now is a good time to start preparing the ground in readiness for planting deciduous fruit trees. These will all be appearing in your local Tasmanian Plants Plus stores in June.
- Use blended loam and a mixture of fertilisers and compost to prepare your planting area.
- Cut back old berry canes to the ground, but make sure you leave young shoots to bear next season's fruit.
- To combat large outbreaks of cabbage moth, which can be quite numerous in autumn - spray crops with Dipel or Yates Success.

Edibles

- Plant seedlings of cabbage, cauliflower, silverbeet, shallots and leeks. Why not try some spinach, cabbage, winter lettuce and bok choy - they're all great additions to your winter vegie garden.
- Sow seeds of quick growing leafy vegetables such as Asian Greens, spinach, rocket, cut-again lettuce & Sugar snap peas.
- Cut back Asparagus fronds to the crown.
- Water citrus regularly as the fruit is maturing. A lack of water can cause fruit to drop before it reaches full size.
- Broad beans are a great winter garden crop - plant seeds now into prepared soil. They're easy to grow but make sure you provide some support as they do get reasonably tall and are heavy croppers. They are best picked when young and sweet & make a tasty addition to late winter meals.
- Rhubarb crowns can be lifted, split, and re-planted into newly prepared soil. Rhubarb loves a food rich soil so add in lots of compost, sheep manure, blood and bone, and top dress with general garden fertiliser.

Citrus

Autumn is a great time to plant a new Citrus tree, giving it time to establish and develop a healthy root system before vigorous spring growth.

Citrus love a warm, sheltered spot away from cold winds and foliage damaging frosts. Keep them well watered, especially while fruiting. Sometimes the foliage of citrus can go a bit yellow, especially when the plant is under stress, but this can easily be remedied with regular applications of a liquid fertiliser, such as the seaweed based Powerfeed - be sure to soak the soil as well as sprinkling the foliage.

Citrus are prone to scale - small brownish scabs under the leaves and on stems. This is often associated with sooty mould - a black powdery coating on leaves that is a fungus that feeds off the sugary secretions from the scale; as well as ants climbing all over the plant. Spray scale with Pest Oil. You need to cover the scale as the spray works by smothering it. The sooty mould will stop spreading once the scale is dead and not producing the sugary secretion.

The Meyer lemon is the most popular lemon variety for Tassie, but Eureka & Lisbon can also be grown successfully. And if you have a particularly sheltered area that traps the sun, it is possible to get oranges to fruit in Tassie!

Flowers

Planting for winter colour. The days may be getting shorter and the summer flowers in the garden are all coming to an end but there are lots of plants that will give you warmth and colour in your winter garden.

Old favourites include the Golden Diosma, Azaleas, Camellias, Rhododendrons, Ericas, Daphnes, Hellebores and Paper Daisies. Of course we can't forget about Leucadendrons & Proteas - also a show stopper!

Spring Bulbs

Bulbs only produce flowers if they have been planted correctly. A general guide is to plant each bulb into a hole that measures twice the bulbs width.

Bulbs also need good soil drainage as poorly drained soil or wet conditions can result in bulbs rotting as they lay dormant in the soil. The best growing conditions for bulbs can be obtained by planting them under deciduous trees where they have sunshine as the bulbs grow in winter and are shaded during summer.

Tulips love to be kept cool - for best flowering results - buy your tulips early and keep them in the crisper in your fridge for about 6 weeks prior to planting them at the correct depth. As flowering ends - feed your bulbs with bulb food to ensure great blooms next year.

GARDENS ARE OUR THING!