

Fall is a great time for planting

*Pamela Corle-Bennett
Ohio State University Extension – Clark County
Published September 9, 2017*

Fall is an excellent time for planting in the landscape and garden.

The nice thing about fall planting is that the air is usually a little bit cooler and we tend to have a little more moisture to help establish plant roots.

Most resources will tell you that for plants to grow their best, they need at least one inch of rainfall a week. Thus, if we don't get rain you must supplement, especially on new plants.

If we get into a dry fall, this means keep watering until the ground freezes. We have a tendency to put the hoses away at the end of the growing season (mid-October) and stop watering.

A plant shouldn't go into the winter months dry, otherwise, they will dry out. Not as fast as they would in the heat of spring and summer, but they will lose moisture.

I truly believe that this is why so many people lose their mums over the winter. My theory is that we keep them watered long enough for them to bloom. Once they finish blooming, we stop watering the plant.

The roots are still growing and need water; they dry out and die even before winter sets in.

Or we continue to water and keep the plant green until a hard freeze but we don't mulch the root system in order to prevent heaving that eventually leads to root death.

If you are planting mums this fall, try watering to keep them green until a hard freeze and then once the ground freezes, cover the base of the plant with around 10-12 inches of mulch. You may be surprised at the results.

The same goes for planting those perennials that you find on sale in the garden centers this time of the year. The longer you wait to plant them the less opportunity for root development.

Care for them just like you would the mums and you will be much more successful.

Trees and shrubs can also be planted in the fall and into the winter if the ground is not frozen. Again, water, water, water and mulch those smaller plants that would be more susceptible to the roots heaving from freezing and thawing soil.

In terms of grass seed, don't wait much longer for a fall season planting. Fall is the best time of the year to start or renovate your lawn or to fill in bare spots.

Turfgrass grows best in conditions of warm days and cool nights. Perennial ryegrass for instance, will germinate in seven to ten days this time of the year.

If you are going to seed, make sure that you have good "seed to soil" contact. In other words, loosen up that hard compacted clay soil so that the seed has a fairly decent opportunity to get a good root system.

Winter is also a good time to seed grass but prepare the lawn in the fall, before the ground freezes. Throw some seed down in February and when weather conditions turn to warm sunny days and cool nights, the seed will germinate.



Keep watering your new plant until the ground freezes to keep the root system healthy



Mulch newly planted perennials and small trees in shrubs when planting in the fall to protect from heaving