

Gardener's Corner

September/October 2026

Finally, we have some cooler weather. There are lots of tasks waiting for this more pleasant temperature. It's time to get the garden ready for fall and winter.

The **Missouri Botanical Garden** has these tips and tasks for September and October. Now through November is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. Make certain to water plants thoroughly and provide mulch for winter protection using the "donut" method (leave a space between the mulch and tree trunk). This prevents both damage to trees and root girdling. Divide your spring blooming perennials, like peonies, now. Plant peonies only 1-2 inches deep to assure that flowers will form.

Cut down perennials to about 1 inch above soil as they start to die back but leave some natives (echinacea, rudbeckia and helianthus) for wildlife to have a food source in fall and winter. Spring bulbs, daffodils and others should be planted by mid to late October. Plant daffodils and other spring bulbs by mid to late October. You can plant tulips until the ground freezes.

Gardening Know How has good information on what to do for your peonies to prepare them for winter. The article, *What to do with Peonies in September – 5 Easy Tasks That Will Ensure Beautiful, Blousy Blooms Next Year*, gives some good tips on how to get those big, attractive flowers next spring. Find it at:

https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/peony/what-to-do-with-peonies-in-september?utm_source=Selligent&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=0260921_XGK_NWL&utm_content=0260921_XGK_NWL&utm_term=31060374&m_j=xugC0H9IFQprk2xCLDK4WOvPfQ2K0chxXxiOaGZVMUH5th5Hq7yZbuTScBCvaVc%2BaAA26qAZyL%2BP38p_Q5VcmmbxelOwLkKsx4

If you are planning to plant bulbs for spring, there is a good article in **Garden Design** that will help you, <https://www.gardendesign.com/bulbs/how-to.html>. The information, *How and When to Plant Bulbs*, covers both spring and summer bulbs. A reminder--we are in Zone 7a, so October to early November is a good time to plant.

Now that trees are starting to turn colors, the question of what to do with the leaves arises. An article, entitled *Utilizing Fall Leaves*, on page 3 of the **MU Extension's** September issue of the **Garden Spade** will help you and may save some work:

https://i.emlfiles4.com/cmpdoc/9/4/0/0/9/1/files/29764_september-2026-garden-spade.pdf?utm_campaign=1302863_September%202026%20Garden%20Spade&utm_medium=email&utm_source=email&dm_j=42N5,RXAN,4SVDF6,3ELB2,1,0,0,0

Basically, shredding leaves and then leaving them in the grass, spreading on garden beds, and adding to compost piles are the best ways to enhance your lawn and garden—saves both money for leaf bags and energy in removing them.

Be careful out there as you do your fall cleanup. Alpha gal syndrome is a threat to those who encounter tick bites. The incidence of Alpha gal syndrome in Missouri is considered one of the highest rates in the U.S. behind Arkansas. This article from the **University of Missouri Extension**, *Alpha-Gal Syndrome Awareness*, gives good information on this condition: <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/n1350>. More information on the allergy is available from a report entitled *1 in 4 adults in tick-heavy states test positive for alpha-gal antibodies* by the **Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy**. You can find it on the **University of Minnesota Extension** website, <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/tick-borne-disease/1-4-adults-tick-heavy-states-test-positive-alpha-gal-antibodies>.

Stay safe and enjoy this cooler weather!