

Autumn... a perfect time to plant

by Sheri Sinni and JoAnn Lubick

I can't believe that autumn is here. Where has the summer gone? It seems like all I have done is weed and clean out overgrown plants. I love autumn: the weather is cooler, plant catalogs start coming in, and the planning and planting starts for next spring. Autumn is a perfect time to plant; the days are getting shorter and cooler. Plants are able to establish a healthy root system through the winter and get a head start before next spring.

Shop early for the best selection of bulbs. I enjoy planting crocus, daffodils, iris, ranunculus and tulips. This is also a good time to plant vegetables. In fact, we are going to start our winter vegetables at Garden Accents. So stop by and check them out. I'm partial to Renee's Garden seeds which are available on line at www.renees-garden.com. This is also an opportune time to fertilize your roses, which will encourage a flush of autumn blooms. I normally have roses through Thanksgiving. Late September is also a good time to jump start your lawn. You can rent dethatchers and aerators from equipment rental companies. Afterwards, follow-up with a complete lawn fertilizer.

If you would like your garden to have a little burst of color this time of year, Asters are perfect perennials. Asters attract Monarchs and other butterflies and bees love them too. In our climate, you need to plant them no later than mid-October.

Fall is also a good time to take pictures of your successes and failures in your garden so you can remember what worked and

what didn't. Then, you can make adjustments for next season.

As the days get cooler and our summer garden plants have completed their life cycles, we should take time to re-evaluate our drip system. As you pull-up your dead tomato plants, close-off the unneeded drip heads. Some of the drippers can be plugged, some have turn-off valves and if all else fails, the hose can be crimped.

After I pull my tired cucumber plants out of their containers, I will prepare my pot for a winter crop vegetable. This year I want to plant some cabbage, kale and lettuce. With the drip system turned-off and the old plants gone, I will refresh the soil in the pot by mixing in more of my favorite potting soil. I love the Miracle Grow Moisture Control. It really works! For absolutely no scientific reason that I know of, my next step is to let my refreshed soil rest for a week or so. Perhaps it was a wives tale I heard but I like to think that my garden deserves a short vacation after working so hard for me all summer. When I am ready to replant, I wake my drip system from its rest, and get the water working in each pot before I plant again. Even though the days will be cooler, and we will have some rain, our plants will still need watering. We can water less often than in the summer; but do not forget your winter garden.

Until next time, have a wonderful fall season and a Happy Halloween.

Information provided by Garden Accents. They are located at 11155 Lena Avenue in Gilroy. Winter hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 8 am to 5 pm and Sunday from 8 am to 4 pm. Take a virtual tour at garden-accents.net.