November Gardening To-Do

- If you haven't already, pull up all annuals and cut back perennials, except those that you'd like to enjoy through the winter, such as ornamental grasses, sedums, and others.
- Dig up and store indoors any tender bulbs, such as gladiolus, cannas, dahlias, and caladiums, that you want to store over the winter.
- Empty all pots and store indoors for the winter. In Iowa's harsh winters, even plastic containers will crack and clay pots will definitely shatter.
- If you have any newly planted trees, especially fruit trees, wrap them with a protective tree wrap now. It prevents sun scald and also prevents rabbits and rodents from nibbling the tasty bark. Remove in spring.
- If you want to be safe, wrap boxwood and any other borderline-hardy evergreens to Iowa in burlap. It's a good idea also to wrap any new evergreens that you planted earlier this year. This will prevent winter burn, which can disfigure the plant badly enough you have to dig it up or cut it down.
- Perennials and strawberries do best with 1 to 4 inches of a loose, removable mulch over and/or around them. Leaves chopped by running a mower over them are perfect.
- Protect roses. Mound all but rugosa roses around the base with 8 to 12 inches of compost or rich, dark soil to protect the bud union (right above the roots) from winter cold.

  Hybrid teas, grandiflora, and floribunda roses—the least cold hardy types—are more likely to survive the winter if you also wrap their stems in burlap and twine.
- October is the ideal time to plant spring-blooming bulbs, but you can plant them as long as the soil isn't frozen. You will, however, reduce your chances of their doing well next spring. Water well after planting.
- Now is the time to force bulbs, that is, plant them in pots and chill them in the refrigerator to take out and grow indoors later in the winter,

Notes

- Rake leaves as needed. Keep it off the grass--it can suffocate it. Running the mower over leaves to chop them reduces their volume and makes perfect compost material.
- Do one final mowing. Then run it until the gas tank is empty to store it for winter. Do annual maintenance on your mower and sharpen the blade (or have a professional do it) so it's ready to go for spring.
- Detatch garden hoses or your faucet may freeze and damage pipes. Drain the hoses and store in the garage or other sheltered place.

Notes