

## ***Garden Tips for October/November***

### ***In the vegetable garden:***

- Pick your green tomatoes before a heavy frost hits them. Only mature green tomatoes can be ripened off the vine. Mature tomatoes are light green in color with a reddish tinge on the blossom end. The pulp inside of a mature tomato should be jelly-like, not firm. To ripen, wrap them individually in newspaper and place them in a box so they are not touching one another in a room at 60-70°F. Check them every 3-4 days for rotten ones. They will ripen over a 3-4 week period.
- Spread compost or mulch on top of your vegetable garden.
- Plant a cover crop in your garden area to come up next spring. Once it is up, turn it under to enrich your soil. You can plant winter wheat, cereal rye, winter rye, triticale, winter barley, or winter peas.

### ***In the landscape:***

- Leave your ornamental grasses up in winter to provide winter texture in the landscape, cut them back a few inches above the ground in early spring.
- Prune your evergreen and conifers. If you have noticed the interior needles of your pine, spruce or fir trees turning yellow or brown and then falling off, you are witnessing normal fall needle loss for your conifer. Conifers will periodically lose their interior needles. It may be more dramatic or noticeable some years depending on the weather. You need only be concerned if the new growth is changing colors, that plant damage may be occurring.
- At the end of October into November, blow out your automatic irrigation system for the winter.
- Wrap the trunks of young, thin barked trees (maples, aspen, ash) in November, with paper tree wrap to prevent sunscald. Remove it in spring (April). Do not leave the tree wrap on though out the summer, it may harbor unwanted insects. Wrap your new trees 2-3 years in a row until the outer bark has thickened.
- Pull up all dead plant materials, rake leaves and remove all fallen branches. This will prevent insects and disease from overwintering.
- Be sure and water your newly planted perennials, trees and shrubs before winter by deep soaking them before the ground freezes. Water every 6-8 weeks throughout winter if there is no snow cover and the ground is warm enough to accept water.



### ***Miscellaneous:***

- Force bulbs indoors to bring some color into your home. The most commonly forced bulbs include crocus, hyacinths, paper whites, amaryllis, tulips, daffodils, miniature iris, and scilla.
- Remove and discard paper wasp nests from the eaves of your home. At this time of year the nests may be empty. Remove at dusk when activity slows down.