



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Helpful Garden Tips for November 2025 (November 1, 2025)

by Peyton Ellas, Tulare/Kings Counties Master Gardener

We've had a perfect start to autumn this year, and in November the season is in full gear. We can feel the transition: gone is summer; winter is coming. This is a great time to plant almost any tree, shrub, perennial, ground cover, wildflower seeds, and the last of spring-flowering bulbs. It's also a good month to finish up pruning spring-blooming shrubs and perennials. Days are shorter, and storms may affect our ability to work outdoors, but November is still a great month for outdoor work.

PLANTING: In the cool autumn weather, transplanted plants will experience less shock. If the soil at root depth is dry, fill the planting hole with water and let it drain, just as you would other times of the year. Keep new transplants well-watered for at least six weeks, so if it doesn't rain, be ready with your irrigation system. Check with your probe tool to make sure the soil is moist down at the root zone, or, if you are like me, you will just poke around with your bare hand. Other than checking for moisture, try not to disturb the roots too much, which also disturbs tiny trails and tunnels of beneficial organisms. If we have light rains, make sure the water is penetrating below the mulch and down to the roots of your new plants.

You may want to wait until spring to plant frost-sensitive plants like citrus, avocado, bougainvillea, native plants from Baja California or the Channel Islands, and many kinds of succulents from all over the world. If you do plant, be prepared to protect them with row cover cloth or other methods through winter. This is an especially good month to plant those California and Mediterranean woody shrubs: manzanita, ceanothus, toyon, lavender, coffeeberry, buckthorn, bush lupin, flannel bush, and rosemary.



When planting trees, remove the nursery stake that comes with the plant and is wrapped closely to the trunk. If your new tree needs staking for a season or two, use bamboo or lodgepoles and proper tree ties, and place the stake towards the outside of the root ball. The trunk should be able to move a little to strengthen.

November is the month to plant spring bulbs like daffodils and narcissus. Plant the bulb three times deeper than its height. Usually, the pointed end of the bulb is placed up when planting. All spring bulbs should be planted by Thanksgiving.

If you grow dahlias, November is the month to dig and divide overcrowded tubers. Store them in a cool, dry place until re-planting in February.



We can still plant winter vegetables like greens, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, celery, cilantro, and lettuce. Protect young plants from early frost. Mature cold-season vegetables don't mind frost; in fact, many of them taste best after a good cold night or two.

MAINTAINING: After the leaves fall, begin pruning deciduous shrubs and trees, not only to shape them, but to prevent storm damage. Our Master Gardener website

(https://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners) has more complete instructions, illustrations, and a short video on pruning trees the correct way for safety, tree health, and good appearance.

If your peach or nectarine tree had deformed leaves during the summer, it probably had "peach leaf curl". This is a fungal disease that affects fruiting, and if severe, it can cause the tree to die. To control peach leaf curl:

- Rake leaves when they fall. Remove any old fruit, called "mummies," and discard. Do not add these to your compost pile. (Removing mummies is good advice for all fruit and nut trees.)
- Spray trunk, branches, and the ground underneath the tree with a copper-based fungicide or a Bordeaux mixture (a slurry made of hydrated lime and copper sulfate). You can also use a synthetic fungicide. Products need to have 50 percent copper to be effective.
- One application is usually enough. If we have another wet winter, spray again before the flower buds swell in the spring.

If you can, grind up pruned branches and leaves to use as mulch. The best mulch is the plants' own leaves and twigs, so if you can stand it, leave the leaves under your trees and shrubs. But any kind of mulch, even uniform "pebble" or "walk on" mulch, is better than nothing. Rock and gravel are also considered mulch, with many of the same benefits as organic products. Rock holds heat in the summer; however, not all plants thrive with rock mulch. I think many commercial gardeners don't know what to do with organic

mulch, so it ends up leaving the property as the power blowers do their work week after week. But for us home gardeners, we can probably slow down and take the time to rake and tidy the organic mulch without removing it completely. And we can replenish as needed when we start to see bare dirt.

If the month is on the dry side, remember to deep water your established trees and large shrubs, even if they have lost their leaves. Your irrigation controller should be adjusted downward even if we don't get a lot of rain. Cooler nights and shorter days mean that most plants will not need as much water, and waterlogged roots and drowned micro-organisms could be a problem you won't see until next year when the plants try to start growing again. Too much water also contributes to soil loss from erosion.

Stop deadheading roses and other spring-bloomers to encourage them to settle into dormancy. All plants require a dormant period to thrive into old age. Some of our native plants go dormant in summer. We are more familiar with plants like deciduous trees and roses that go dormant in winter. Don't fertilize winter-dormant species or try to keep them blooming. It is their season to wind down in preparation for a winter rest.

CONSERVING: Consider leaving some seed stalks on some of your ornamental grasses and perennials for birds to forage this winter. In the edible garden, add straw, old hay, alfalfa pellets, and/or compost to the planting beds. If you take care of the soil, your plants will be stronger and better able to resist pest pressures next year, making it possible to save time and money and reduce the need for synthetic chemicals. Experts agree that instead of feeding plants, we should make efforts to care for the soil and let the soil take care of the plants. Keep after the weeds that use up nutrients. It's too late to solarize soil, but you can cover it with weed cloth, newspaper, cardboard, or cover it with very thick mulch until spring. Or grow a cover crop like red clover, vetch, or winter rye. This summer, I used abundant cardboard sheets to control Bermuda grass in my edible garden, and it was a success in keeping both the weeds and insects like spider mites to a minimum. Now, I will remove the cardboard and grow a cover crop in the beds that are not getting planted with cool-season veggies.

Enjoy the colors of fall, including our natural native tapestry of golds, browns, yellows, rust, and greens. Happy harvest! Happy growing!

Questions? Call the Master Gardeners:

Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tues & Thurs, 9:30-11:30;

Kings County: (559) 852-2736, Thursday Only, 9:30–11:30 am

Visit our website for past articles, sign up for our e-newsletter, or email us with your questions:

http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mgtularekings14/> ; Instagram at: @mgtularekings

The Tulare-Kings Counties Master Gardeners will answer your questions in person:

Visalia Farmer's Market, 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 8 - 11 am, Tulare Co. Courthouse

Luis Nursery, 2nd Saturday, 10 am – 2 pm, 139 S. Mariposa Ave., Visalia

Hofman's Nursery, 3rd Saturday, 10 am – 1 pm, 12491 W Lacey Blvd., Hanford