















Farmer Fred - OCTOBER GARDEN CHORES FOR THE CENTRAL VALLEY, FOOTHILLS & BAY AREA


-  Feed roses one more time to keep the blooms coming through the fall.
-  Clean up the summer vegetable garden. Plant a cover crop such as vetch or clover.
-  Vegetables to plant from seed now include radish, spinach, peas and fava beans
-  This is a great time for planting new trees and shrubs, especially ones with outstanding fall foliage for our area. Good specimens include Chinese pistache, tupelo, red oak and scarlet oak.
-  Dethatch, aerate and overseed bermuda grass lawns with rye grass to keep it green all winter.
-  Cool season lawns, such as the popular fescue blends, are putting on a spurt of growth now. Mow often so that you are never removing more than a third of the total height of the grass blade.
-  Nurseries have a good supply of winter blooming annuals in supply this month; also, select onion sets now for your vegetable garden.
-  This is a good time to plant ground covers. This will give their root systems a chance to get established for their burst of spring growth.
-  Despite the cooler temperatures, your lawn and garden still need about an inch of water a week. Unless the rains come, keep your automatic sprinklers operating.
-  After you've cleared out the dying summer vegetables, prepare for next year's garden by checking the soil pH. Test kits are available at just about every nursery.
-  Feed your bare garden soil during the winter with a cover crop of clover, fava beans or vetch. This will add nitrogen for next year.


 Tomato hornworms are going into hibernation in the soil beneath your tomato plants. Dig down about four inches and discard their cocoons, which resemble two inch-long, reddish footballs.


 Scatter and plant tulip and daffodil bulbs outdoors for a more natural look.


 Add some indoor color for the upcoming holiday seasons by planting bulbs now in containers.

 Now is your last, best opportunity to renovate an ailing lawn. Overseed bermuda grass lawns with annual or perennial rye seed.

 Protect rhododendron and azalea roots during the winter by adding two or three inches of mulch beneath those plants.

 Available now at nurseries: colorful winter blooming annuals such as violas, calendulas, stock, Iceland poppies and snapdragons.

 Temperatures dipping down below freezing can occur here in early November. Prepare for that possibility by moving frost-sensitive potted plants indoors.

 Row covers, hot caps, and water-filled containers surrounding young vegetable seedlings offer these plants a warmer nighttime environment.

 Prepare for the rainy season by knocking down watering basins around trees.