

In the Garden with Shobha Vanchiswar



November 2, 2007

Things to Remember to Do in November.

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1. Gather the last of your vegetables if you haven't already. Those green tomatoes can either be turned into fried green tomatoes or be individually wrapped in newspaper and kept in a dry, dark place at room temperature. Check on them every couple of days. They will ripen soon enough. Harvest the beets, potatoes, kale, chard, beans etc. Can't you just taste that hearty soup?

2. In the vegetable bed, clear out all the plants and turn over the soil. There will be less work in the spring. Do note down where you planted each type of vegetable. Next year you should plant different ones in their place. Crop rotation is the way to keep the soil enriched and diseases at bay.

3. Collect seeds. This applies to flowers as well as vegetables and fruits. Dry seeds on a tray and then put into labeled envelopes. Store in a cool, dry place.

4. Clean out all pots, dry them outside and then store indoors. Remember to place newspaper between terracotta pots if you are stacking them.

5. Drain all garden hoses and put away. Shut off outdoor taps.

6. Purchase bird seed. Set up and fill bird feeders.

7. Halloween may be over, but fall displays of pumpkins and gourds are still appropriate for the Thanksgiving season. Incidentally, take down Halloween

decorations and put them away.

8. Bring in tender perennials and place in a sunny area of the house. I also keep Jasmines, Brugamansias and citrus in pots. These bloom in the winter months and provide much cheer. They are wonderfully fragrant and evoke dreams of tropical vacations in the midst of bone chilling days.

9. Rake up all leaves. Convince children and their play dates to help with the incentive of playing in the piles later. Bag leaves for curbside pick up. Better yet, dump them in the compost. If you do not have a compost bin, consider starting one. Those with woodlands around their property can haul the leaves there. It is a lot of work but it means enjoying the outdoors and skipping a trip to the gym.

10. Prune roses and fruit trees, but avoid hard pruning. Just lop off enough so a snow or ice storm will not break the limbs. Remove all dead wood.

11. Bittersweet is a beautiful addition to fall arrangements but please keep in mind that it is an invasive and non-native plant. Ideally, it should be eradicated.

12. This is the last chance to get bulbs into the ground, otherwise, it will be too late.

13. Continue a weeding schedule. For some reason they manage to keep thriving. The rogues can be spotted more easily at this time.

14. Keep up with cutting back plants in beds. Leave seed heads and pods for birds to enjoy. Some tall perennial grasses look sculptural in winter.

15. Remove twigs and other debris from flower beds.

16. Start saving garden and plant catalogs that arrive. They will provide ample excuse to sit down by the fire place in winter to peruse and plan next year's garden.

Addendum: I went to the Japanese chrysanthemum exhibit "Kiku" at the New York Botanical Gardens. It is quite beautiful and interesting, certainly worth a visit. The exhibit is on until November 18th. Tickets can be purchased and reserved online at <http://www.nybg.org/kiku/>.

Shobha Vanchiswar has been gardening all her life, the last 19 years in Chappaqua. She received the Golden Trowel Award for garden design in 2007 from Garden Design magazine. She has a garden design business, Seeds of Design.

