

Autumn in the Garden

By David Maher

Gardens at the end of summer are generally beyond their best. Autumn is an ideal time to clean, tidy up and rejuvenate a garden.

GENERALLY

Compost: Fork over heaps every few days so that aeration is maximized and the contents are mixed, heated and decomposed.

Propagation: Semi-hardwood cuttings of natives, perennials and gardenias can be taken, dipped in a hormone or honey or Vegemite, and potted in a mix of sand/peat or zeolite crystals/peat. (Honey & Vegemite are hormonal and make great rooting dips)



Herbaceous Perennials

Remove spent flower stalks and trim back tired and fading foliage so that nutrients can be conserved for the remainder of the plant.

Overcrowded perennial clumps can be rejuvenated through their division and either replanted into fresh soil or re-potted into premium potting mix so that reinvigoration will occur before next spring's and summer's flowerings.



Ornamentals

Prune summer flowering shrubs and relocate, if necessary, while the soil is still warm
Trim hedges.



Camellias: Finish removing excess buds where they are cluttered or in pairs. (Do not disbud *C. sasanquas*.)

Gardenias: Prune lightly when flowering has concluded and fertilize.

Dahlias: Continue to deadhead.

Day Lilies: Lifting and dividing should occur.



Lavender: Trim lightly and remove any dead and old canes.

Liliums: Lift, divide and replant in late autumn, if the clumps have become crowded.

Polyanthuses and Primula obconicas: Lift, clean up and replant in fresh compost or premium potting mix.

Pelargoniums that have grown beyond their bounds can be reduced heavily.

Roses: Before ordering roses visit a nursery to observe plants while they are in flower in autumn. Follow up by examining your potential purchases in a rose catalogue before ordering.



Natives



Kangaroo Paw: Cut the spent flower heads back to ground level when flowering finished.

NSW Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*): Cut back behind the spent flower heads.

Edibles

Citrus: one and two year old trees- either remove all fruit or thin heavily so the tree can develop more robustly.



Apricot and Plum Trees: Prune.

Beans: Add to compost heap when finished cropping as they add nitrogen.

Chives: Grow throughout the year in a sunny position in a rich organic mix (include some blood and bone), and give regular, nitrogenous foliar sprays plus adequate moisture. Pumpkins are ready to pick after the stem has browned.

Maintenance of Camellias

Diagnosis: Leaf drop; leaf burn particularly on the edges of leaves; some small, bare twigs; some evidence of die back of new shoots emerging.

Treatment: Keep moist but not over-wet; prune out small, bare twigs; cut back any badly affected stems until you reach green wood; remove any buds from the small stems that have survived; and ensure that no stem or twig is carrying more than one bud. A foliar spray of 'Seasol' or Yates' Dynamic Lifter Concentrated Sea Weed Plant Food can revitalize.

Happy Gardening