

Late Summer Gardening

Elaine Cameron, Master Gardener

The recent rains and cooler temperatures remind gardeners its time to begin planning garden projects for the pleasant autumn days ahead. Fall is the second gardening season of the year in East Texas after plants and gardeners have survived the summer heat.

When your yard dries out take a stroll and evaluate your plants, especially the new varieties you added this year. Make notes of which plants performed well in the heat and which plants have struggled or died to help you plan for next year.

Plan where you want to plant spring flowering bulbs. Later this month prepare beds by tilling organic matter into your soil. Bulbs like raised beds that drain well. Next week this column will tell you more about which varieties of bulbs are suited for our area.

October is the time to plant annuals for fall, winter and early spring color. Choices include pansies, snapdragons, ornamental kale, stock and dianthus. Start making space in your beds and work in additional organic matter.

Summer blooming annuals and perennials, such as lantanas, pentas, salvias, impatiens and periwinkle may be overgrown or spindly and a little ragged. A light pruning to shape them followed by a water soluble fertilizer will get them ready for a fall color show.

Crape myrtles and roses will also benefit from a light pruning, removing any dead branches, weak unproductive growth and seed heads to stimulate new growth and fall

blooms. Feed your roses lightly with fertilizer or use a water-soluble fertilizer, always following label directions. Also continue a disease spray schedule on roses, as black spot and mildew can be troublesome in September and October.

Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees or shrubs, saving heavier pruning for wintertime. Spring flowering shrubs and trees should not be pruned because they have already set buds for spring blossoms.

September and October is the time to divide spring flowering perennials such as iris, gaillardia, rudbeckia, cannas, daylilies, violets, liriope and ajuga. Share excess plant divisions with your friends and neighbors.

Upcoming Angelina Master Gardener events: Cary Sims, County Extension Agent, will discuss “Lawncare”, 12 noon on Wednesday, September 10 at the Angelina County Extension Office, 2201 S. Medford Dr., Lufkin. (on the loop next to Farmer’s Market). Phone 634-6414 for more information.

Angelina Master Gardeners are available to answer your gardening and yard care questions. Contact us by calling 634-6414 or visit our website at <http://www.go-lufkin.com/mastergardeners/> and e-mailing your questions.