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FREE Desert Gardening News

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FALL 2011

Fall Really is for Planting in the Desert!

It's no surprise to gardeners who have lived here for years that now is the best time to put in certain plants. By planting in the fall, it gives them a big head start toward surviving our harsh temperatures next summer! By planting early in the fall you are allowing the plants to get over any transplant shock before the cold sets in. Extreme temperatures, whether cold or hot, can put stress on plants and make it harder for them to grow and develop. Now, some of you are probably thinking – why not just avoid that problem by waiting until after the cold weather is over to plant? The answer to that question is that plants don't totally stop growing just because the weather is cold. In our climate, we do get cold enough to freeze – freeze above ground, that is! Very seldom does the ground ever freeze solid here, and if it does, it's only for a very short time and to a very shallow depth. Because of this, plants may suffer some damage from the cold to their leaves or small branches, or in extreme cases, even to their entire above ground growth, but their roots will continue to grow under the insulating blanket of soil that they are planted in. Even deciduous plants that lose all their leaves in the winter and appear to stop growing continue to grow their roots below ground.

Any deciduous plant (loses its leaves in the winter) is a great candidate for fall planting. These include most of the abundantly flowering shrubs and trees like, Butterfly Bush (right), Lilacs, Crape Myrtle, Pink Dawn Chitalpa, Desert Willow and of course most of the fruit trees like Peach, Nectarine, Apple and Plum to name a few.



If you're looking to add some colorful plants or attract wildlife to your landscape the fall is an excellent time to do it.

Because these plants drop their leaves when it's cold they are by that nature more immune to cold damage.

Don't assume that you can't plant evergreens (plants that do not drop their leaves) during the fall planting season, as well. Many of them are very cold hardy. Take Juniper or Pine for instance. Most of the juniper varieties that Star Nursery carries can withstand winter cold down to zero. Mondell and Aleppo Pines can withstand temps nearly this cold, and let's face it our winters are chilly but not that cold.



Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*) is not only a cold and heat hardy evergreen, it flowers profusely during the spring. It is a beautiful slow growing addition to any landscape.

By planting in the fall, you are giving the plant roots an extra three or four months of development over plants that are planted in the spring. So, they will have more roots to take up water and nutrients for the plant when the stressing summer heat arrives.

For this reason, there are many categories of plants that will actually do better if planted in the fall rather than in the spring. Here are some examples.....

Fruit and Shade Trees: These plants benefit greatly from fall planting. They get to develop and spread out their new roots, not only to take up more water and nutrients to help it grow more quickly when the warm

weather returns, but also to anchor and stabilize the tree during those early spring and summer winds!

Shrubs: Both deciduous and hardy evergreen shrubs benefit from the extra root growing time as well, making them far less likely to suffer the effects of the first summer's heat stressing and burning.

Roses: Fall is a great time to plant roses for the same reasons. Also, they should be all budded and blooming again, now that the weather is cooling, so you can see exactly what colors you are getting.

Perennials: Don't forget about perennials! Most of these beautiful, blooming plants prefer the cool weather, so now is the best time to plant them. Come in and check out our selection of Proven Winners and other perennials.

Fall Bulbs: These spring flowering varieties are arriving in our stores now and should be planted as soon as possible. Be sure to "chill" the varieties that need it (like tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths) by putting them in paper bags and storing them in your refrigerator for four to six weeks before planting.

Cool Weather Vegetables and Herbs: now is the time to get your cool season vegetables for the garden. Varieties include 'leafy' crops like cabbage, collards, mustard, lettuce, spinach, broccoli and brussels sprouts. Also, 'root' crops like beets, carrots, onions, radishes and turnips. Don't forget the peas! We also carry a great selection of herbs for fall gardening. Most all of these varieties are available in both seed packets or in growing plants.

Cool Season Color: If you have some seasonal flower beds or containers, you know that now is the time to change them out with the cool season items. Pansies, English Primrose, Ornamental Kale, Stocks and Snapdragons are all beautiful cool season color that will last through the cold months.

As you can see, there are a great number of plants that should or can be planted in the fall. However, there are some things that you should wait until spring to plant. These include frost tender items that might suffer heavy frost damage. Read our signs that explain plant characteristics when you visit our stores. These will let you know if a plant is frost tender, and if so will tell you what temperature might cause damage. This way you can make the best choices about what will be the most hardy for fall planting. Don't forget we have trained plant specialists at each store to help you when you have questions that aren't answered by our signs.

Planting: When putting in your new plants, don't dig that hole too deep (to avoid burying the plant too deeply, the top of the root ball should be even or slightly higher than your soil level), but dig it

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plenty wide, and amend the soil with a quality compost like Dr. Q's Paydirt Planting Mix and Mulch. Desert soils basically have no organic material in them which is needed in order to help the roots expand and thrive. Incompletely composted amendments tend to take nitrogen away from the plant as they continue to decompose. This weakens the plant during the critical transplant period and contributes to transplant shock. Add about 30% Paydirt (fully composted) planting mix to your native soil and you'll have a good balance for the best start you can offer your new plants. Also, add in some Dr. Q's Gold Dust Starter Fertilizer to give it enough phosphorous and sulfur to combat our high pH problem, and because it was specifically designed to support plants in the desert during their vulnerable transplant period. After planting, water in with our Dr. Q's Plant Tonic which is filled with micro nutrients vital for plant health, root stimulation and shock prevention.

Yes, fall is the best time for planting the largest variety of plants. Read the signs and know your plants. Place them in your landscape where they'll do best, and plant them properly. Provide appropriate desert plant care and your yard will look as beautiful as you dreamed it could and will look even better next spring!

Container Gardening

Gardening in containers is easily one of the most fun, creative and space-saving projects that one can enjoy. It is an excellent way to provide focal points, interesting textural concepts, color creations, and instant gardens, a "Garden in a Pot", if you will.

This method is especially useful for apartment and condo dwellers, as well as the elderly and disabled. Yet anyone can enjoy the beauty of a well-thought out container, whether it is utilized for growing fruits and vegetables, or ornamental plants and flowers.

There are four basic and simple concepts to container gardening: The container itself, the soil and nutrients, the plant material, and choosing the best way to provide water. Starting with the container, it should be large

enough to hold the plants (or plant) you have chosen. The rule of thumb is twice the size of the container that the plant has come in. Other deciding factors besides size are the color choice, shape of the pot, and does it provide drainage.

When it comes to choosing the soil, always choose a POTTING mix, not a PLANTING mix. Potting soils, such as Star Nursery's Filthy Rich, is formulated to provide excellent drainage and porosity (air spaces) for containerized plant roots. Planting mixes are formulated to incorporate with existing, or native soils. They are too dense for containers, interfering with water and oxygen levels.

Nutrients and soil go hand in hand. When filling your container, this is a good time to add a granular fertilizer. Star Nursery has formulated the Dr. Q's Gold Dust Starter Fertilizer product with this in mind, providing just enough nutrients for newly containerized, or for that matter, any newly installed plant. The Macro-nutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorous, and Potassium) are in the right amounts for your project, as are the Micro-nutrients (Iron, Zinc, etc.) After this initial fertilization, it is best to provide occasional liquid fertilizers, as nutrients get washed out with the frequent irrigations that containerized plants demand.

And now, for the really fun part, the plant choices! The sky is the limit in deciding what to install. From annual color to vines or vegetables, anything is possible. Imagine a salsa garden, with tomatoes, cilantro, onions and peppers. How about playing with color, heights, and textures, such as an upright grassy plant or vine in the center or back of the container, layered with medium size perennials, then small size annuals, and then trailing plants. Or fill a bowl with succulents; they come in so many colors and textures. Play with two colors, like blues and grays, or choose the warm colors (reds, yellows, oranges) and play them off of each other. The possibilities are numerous, exciting, and rewarding.

Finally, keeping the container properly hydrated. Providing a dripper (or drippers) up and through the bottom of the pot is the most effective way. If you choose to water by hand, this is fine also. The important thing is to understand the site you have set the pot upon. A windy, sunny site will dry out sooner and require more water than a shadier, more protected site.

The most important thing to take away from this is, just dig in! And have a good time!

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Backyard on a Budget - What to do with that big, bare wall?



The common backyard in the southwest is bordered by a large cement block wall. This wall creates privacy that many homeowners desire and definitely provides a break from the wind. However, if you haven't planted shrubs or trees to soften that wall and fill up the bare space in front of it – it probably isn't very attractive. One of the most economical ways to add color and texture to a bare wall is to plant a climbing or trailing vine. This is a simple weekend project that over time can change that bare wall into a beautiful focal point in your backyard. If you are willing to get your hands dirty, the sales staff at Star Nursery can help you get your project started for under \$50.

Know Your Location:

One of the biggest reasons plants fail is because they are planted in the wrong location. Before you head down to Star Nursery to pick out your vines, know how much sun this area is going to get. A southern or western-facing wall can simply be too hot for many vines. Do not be discouraged. There are many varieties that will do extremely well with that type of exposure. Determine how many hours of sun the wall gets,

**Remember the good old days
when doctors made house calls?**

I do, Dr. Q here. I can help diagnose your irrigation needs, seasonal plant stress issues, pest control, nutrient deficiencies, pruning and more.



**Call me at
688-STAR (7827) to
set up an appointment
or visit any one of our
Star Nursery locations.**

*House call fee applies.

Each house call visit includes a prescription for your needs.

*For local areas, including Bloomington, Dammeron Valley, Diamond Valley, Hurricane, Ivins, Laverkin, Leeds, St. George, Washington, Winchester the fee is \$60.

*For outlying areas, including Cedar City, Central, Enterprise, Mesquite, New Harmony, Pine Valley, Springdale & the Zions area the fee is \$85.



TWO GREEN LOCATIONS:

1145 W. Sunset Blvd.
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(435) 688-STAR (7827)

385 W. Telegraph Rd.
Washington City, Utah
(435) 986-0820

THE RIGHT PRICE, THE BEST ADVICE®

measure the area you want to cover and know what type of material the wall is constructed of. Having this information will help you make the right choice and will provide a successful end result. See Star Note # 515 "Growing Vines in the Desert" to help you decide what type of vine will work best in your location.

To Trellis or Not to Trellis:

Growing vines on a trellis is easy. A trellis made of wood or a composite trellis is very inexpensive and can hold up for many years in our climate. In fact, Star Nursery carries large espaliered vines that are ready-to-plant. The work is already done except for the planting. However, if you want to cover an area that is much larger than the trellis itself you might want to re-think this option. Oftentimes a vine that initially covers a small trellis is unfortunately allowed to overgrow that trellis by many feet. With specimens like Yellow Banks' Rose or Pyracantha, this can happen very quickly. Soon the weight of that plant breaks the trellis or pulls it down – away from the wall. What a mess! So when choosing a trellis, it needs to be the right size for the space you want to cover and it needs to support the plant effectively. Do not choose a 3 foot by 3 foot trellis if the wall you want to cover is an 6 foot by 10 foot wall.

Up Against a Wall:

Some vines just need a little help to get started then they will climb a wall or trellis all on their own. A stucco-covered wall can be damaged by attaching vines directly to it. The damage isn't as severe in our dry climate as it would be in a humid environment. Usually one tolerates the disadvantages because they desire the cosmetic effect of a vine-covered wall. To know just how to attach your vine or if you should use a trellis consider how they climb:

Vines with tendrils like Cat Claw and Tangerine Beauty Crossvine have branched, claw-like ends that hook into rough surfaces. They easily climb any surface they are planted next to with very little support. Twining vines like Star Jasmine and Hall's Honeysuckle have stems that coil around anything small then progress upward as they grow. Start these vines by using nails, wire or string.

Clinging vines like Ivy have aerial roots and holdfast discs that will firmly attach to almost any surface. Start these vines by using nails or dowels and then let them go. A shady location is a must for Ivy to really perform in our climate. Ivy is also a haven for pests. Using a granular or liquid pesticide like Bayer Power Force Multi-Insect Killer will help control this undesirable element.

Clambering vines like Yellow Banks' Rose, Cape Honeysuckle and Bougainvillea must be attached to their support. They have no means of attaching to any structure or wall. All of these varieties are beautiful bloomers and Cape Honeysuckle can survive our winters and it loves the heat! Clambering vines grow quickly and need a lot of maintenance to keep them controlled. Ask one of our experienced salespeople how to properly prune and maintain this type of vine. If you desire the vibrant pink or purple blooms of Bougainvillea be prepared to replace it after a cold winter. If they are in an exposed location they often freeze to the ground and do not recover.

One of the best products that Star Nursery carries for attaching any type of vine to a cinderblock or stucco wall is the Plant Anchor Kit. The kit includes 70 Anchors, 1 tube of adhesive and vinyl stretch tie - everything you need to attach any type of vine to almost any surface for \$14.99. This is by-far the most cost-effective way to cover that wall. The small, metal caps have an eyelet on them and they are attached to the wall surface with the adhesive. After they dry, use the vinyl stretch tie to secure the stems to the cap. As the plant matures and begins to cover the wall it is easy to add more plant anchors for needed support.



So – what are you waiting for? Make a list of what you need, go talk to one of our Plant Specialists at Star Nursery and finally cover up that wall. It will be time and money well spent.

Dealing with Pests - Insects, Diseases & Weeds – OH MY!

Summer can be brutal to plants here in the desert, and there are a number of challenges we can have with our plants and lawns. Well, summer is behind us and the temps should be much nicer – nicer for us, nicer for the plants, and nicer for the insects and weeds that are getting more active now that it's cooler. So, let's get outside and do a little yard work while it's comfortable weather. If there are signs of pests or diseases, you'll need to know what you're up against and how to deal with them, so let's look at these issues.

Insects: Signs of insects can show up in many different ways. Tight curling of leaves, holes in leaves or bark, die-back on branches, or severe discoloration of leaves or blades of grass are some of the more common examples. Sometimes, the tell-tales are ants crawling up and down the stems of shrubs or trees, or moths flying out of the lawn as you walk across it. In these last two examples, the ants and moths are not the true trouble makers, just the indicators. The ants are actually feeding on the 'honeydew' that is secreted by sucking insects that are feeding on your plants, and the moths are laying eggs in your lawn that will produce larvae that will feed on grass roots or stems. At first signs of any of these problems, you should try to identify the insect or bring a sample to one of our stores. To effectively kill the problem insect, search for an insecticide that lists that specific insect on the label. We

carry many Green Light and Bayer products that are very effective. Whether it is Vegetable & Garden Spray, Rose & Flower Care, Tree & Shrub Protection, or Complete Insect Killer for Lawns, we have the product you need to solve the problem.

Diseases: The monsoon season of August through mid September often brings nighttime rain and storms. The moisture from these storms combined with our very warm nights often causes lawn fungus as well as leaf spot, blights and mildew on flowers and shrubs. Fung-Away Granules are perfectly suited for curing and preventing fungus disease like Brown Patch and Dollar Spot on lawns. They can be applied with a spreader, just like fertilizer. If you have had fungus problems in the past, use Fung-Away as a preventive measure before problems show up. Fung-Away Concentrate and Ready-to-Spray are great for trees, shrubs and flowers. Best treatment for fungus problems will require 2 to 3 applications with about 5 to 7 days in between. Make sure to periodically thatch lawns and avoid evening and night time watering or overhead watering of shrubs, as these encourage fungus problems.

Weeds: The weeds have probably been coming on strong in most lawns. Due to the heat risk associated with many selective herbicides, it's been a good idea to wait. Well, wait no longer! As long as the temperatures are consistently below 85, you can apply a product

like 'Weed-B-Gon' to zap the actively growing weeds in your lawn. After doing this, you can stop new weed seeds from sprouting through the application of a pre-emergent herbicide like Portrait to prevent cool-season weeds like wild mustard, dandelions, oxalis and spurge. (Don't use a pre-emergent if over seeding the lawn. Apply seeds in fall and a pre-emergent next spring instead.) If you are re-doing flower beds or gardens for the fall, make sure that you use a pre-emergent on these as well after removing any growing weeds.

If you have a Bermuda grass problem or want to get rid of a Bermuda lawn, now is your last chance before it goes dormant. Once it goes dormant, the only really effective herbicides such as Round Up and Remuda become ineffective because the grass is no longer growing. So, treat it now and then give it a second treatment in mid October.

Finally, for those of you that are concerned about the use of potentially environmentally harmful chemicals, Star Nursery does carry a variety of non-synthetic products for the home, lawn and garden. Among them are the Bayer-Advanced Natria line such as Natria Home Pest Control, Natria Insect, Disease & Mite Control, and Natria Grass & Weed Killer. And for the totally Organic Gardener, there is Natria Multi-insect Control, Natria Insecticidal Soap and Natria Disease Control, all of which are OMRI listed.

Soak This Up! - Understanding your irrigation system...

For most people, their irrigation system is the most misunderstood portion of any landscape. Your watering plays a vital role in the success of all your planting efforts. You can dig the proper hole in the perfect spot, use Paydirt for mulch, Gold Dust Starter Fertilizer and still fail because you did not water properly. Nine times out of ten, plants fail to survive because of their watering schedule. It is just as easy to kill a plant with too much water as it is with not enough.

First things first, let us get to know the controller. This is the brain of the system, Initially, learn how to program your controller. It will make it that much easier to change programs and reset watering for each season. Most controllers contain a minimum of two programs allowing flexibility when setting watering schedules. All clocks contain some form of a back-up system should the power go out. If your controller uses an alkaline battery for power backup, make sure you change it at least once a year. This will ensure that your scheduled program continues to run.

The backflow preventer is the next major component of the system. This device keeps system water (and dirt, fertilizer, etc.) from siphoning back into your drinking water. Most city ordinances require a backflow preventer. It also serves as the main shut-off for your entire irrigation system. The important thing to remember about your backflow preventer is to insulate it in the winter months. This will keep it from breaking in the event of a hard freeze. It is repairable and Star Nursery carries repair kits at all of our locations.

Location, location, location...You should know the current placement of your control valves. No one wants to dig up half of their yard in order to find a malfunction in the system. Here are some DIY pointers for specified situations:

Valve develops a leak or sticks on – Don't panic there is a solution.

- Shut off the water to the valve at the backflow preventer.
- If the valve's problem is not shutting off and water continues to run through it, it is usually a faulty diaphragm. This is a simple fix. Remove the top of the control valve and you will find a rubber disc

piece under the cap. This is the diaphragm. Make sure you do not lose the spring above the diaphragm. Bring in the old diaphragm when you come in to get a replacement to ensure proper match. Re-assemble the valve the same way it came apart.

If valve is not coming on or it is blowing a fuse on your controller

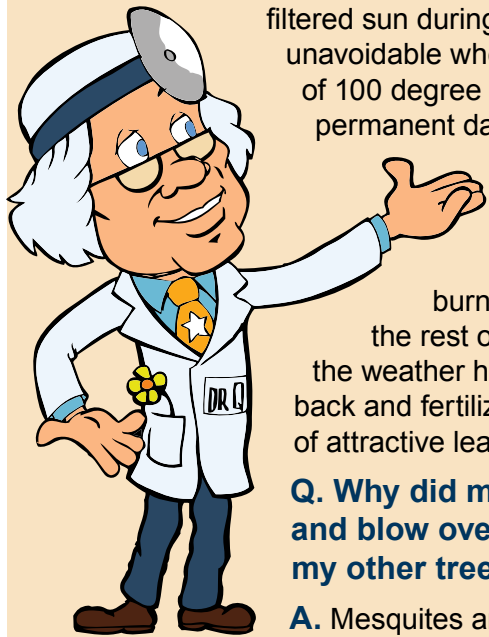
- Chances are you have a bad solenoid. The solenoid typically will outlast the lift of the diaphragm. Newer irrigation controllers will give an error message and bypass the station with a faulty solenoid. If you are unclear on the malfunction of your valve, the easy fix is to buy an identical valve and merely swap them out. No worries. You will not be re-plumbing your back yard to replace a valve.

The flow of things has led us directly to our use of either emitters or sprinkler nozzles. Make sure that you have the correct part for the job. For example, you wouldn't use a 15' nozzle on a patch of grass with dimensions of 5'x10'. This would cause overspray and improper coverage. There are various options to suit your lawn configuration. If you are not getting adequate coverage, take a few minutes to do a rough sketch of your area and mark all locations of current sprinklers. Be sure to include dimensions and bring it in to your local Star Nursery. Our team of irrigation specialists will help make the necessary corrections. Now, in regards to emitters, the main fact to remember is that each emitter connects to micro-tubing and delivers water to specific plants at a slow, consistent rate (like one or two Gallons Per Hour). One should always take the time to do visual inspections to ensure that all emitters are free of clogs and have no hidden leaks along the line. There are several types of emitters out there. Paying attention to the output of an emitter is key. Emitters have varying outputs of 1/2 gallon to 30 gallons per hour (gph). If your dripper puts out a tiny, single stream of water it is probably a one, two, or four gph emitter. These are usually round with "ears" on the sides or an "L" shape or flag emitter. If it puts out fingers of water in an umbrella pattern or floods out of the top, it is either a shrubler or mini bubbler. Shrubblers put out a rate of 0-13 gph whereas mini bubblers have a rate of 0-30 gph. If you are uncertain as

Dr. Q's Corner - Here are some of the most frequently asked questions that have come up recently.

Q. Why are the leaves and flowers on my rose bush burning, aren't they supposed to take sun?

A. Roses do need sun, but here in our extreme summer heat, it is really best to put them where they get afternoon shade or filtered sun during the summer months. The burning is unavoidable when they are exposed to long periods of 100 degree plus temperatures. It does not do permanent damage to the plant, but does make it look bad during this time. Even though it looks bad, avoid cutting the burned foliage back until the weather has cooled down. This burned growth will actually help protect the rest of the plant from getting worse. Once the weather has cooled, you should trim them back and fertilize and you will soon see a new crop of attractive leaves and flowers.



Q. Why did my Mesquite tree get uprooted and blow over in the last wind storm when my other trees were fine?

A. Mesquites are different from most trees in that they do not require much water or fertilizer, but they will use it if it is available to them and this will usually cause problems. If they are planted in a lawn area or get frequent, shallow watering, the entire root system is most likely going to be found near the soil surface. The tree will probably look good and healthy, but these shallow roots don't give the tree much to hold onto in a wind. They get all the nitrogen they need from the bacteria in the soil, so if they are given extra fertilizer, it just adds to their already fast growth rate and creates a dense canopy that acts like a huge sail in the wind.

So, to make you Mesquite more healthy and sturdy, make sure it is watered deeply but not frequently so that the roots will go down and not come to the surface. Also, make sure that you do not use a nitrogen fertilizer on it and that you thin it out regularly so that it allows the wind to blow through it more easily.



Q. What kind of vines can I plant to cover a south facing wall?

A. There are only a few vines that are tough enough to stand up to the full sun in our summer heat. Cat Claw (*Macfadyena unguis-cati*) is one that actually will attach itself to a wall and produces a yellow trumpet flower. The other vines that we would suggest do not attach themselves and would need some kind of support like a trellis or

vine supports to attach them to. These would include *Pyracantha*, *Banks' Rose* with either a white or yellow flower, or one of the *Tecoma* varieties like *Cape Honeysuckle*, *Yellow Bells*, or *Orange Jubilee Bells*. (The *Tecoma* varieties are frost sensitive and will likely freeze back during the winter and then come back in the spring.)

Q. How long should I run my drip system for?

A. This question requires a lot more information in order to answer it properly. It depends most heavily on the size of the plants that you are watering and the amount of water that your emitters put out. For this reason, it is important that you know exactly what type and volume emitters that you have.

The main objective is to get enough water to penetrate the entire root ball of each of the plants you are watering. In general, it takes about one gallon of water to penetrate one cubic foot of soil. Considering that the root system of healthy plants, under optimum conditions, should be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the size of the above ground portion of the plant, you can approximate the size of the root zone from the size of the plant. So, if you have a plant that is 2 feet tall and 2 feet wide, you have a volume of $2 \times 2 \times 2$ or 8 cubic feet. If the root zone is $\frac{3}{4}$ of that volume, it is 6 cubic feet, requiring 6 gallons of water to penetrate it. If you are using 1 gallon per hour emitters and you only have one emitter on this plant, it would have to run for 6 hours to completely penetrate the root zone. You would probably not want run your system for that long, so you can use one 6 gallon emitter or three 2 gallon emitters and run it for one hour to get the same amount of water to the plant. As you can see there can be many answers to this question, depending on what you have to work with.

St. George Events

Downtown Farmers Market

Ancestor Square, May 3- Oct 29
Every Saturday 8am to Noon

www.ancestorsquare.com/business/downtownfarmers.php

Fall Festival & Pumpkin Alley

Tonaquint Nature Center 1851 South Dixie Drive
October 24, 2011, 5pm-7pm

All ghouls and goblins are welcome to participate in the Halloween games, crafts and the pumpkin decorating contest. All decorated pumpkins must be submitted for judging by 6:15pm and must be created by the individual entering the contest. Prizes will be awarded to the top decorators in each age category.
www.st-george.ut.us/recreation/tnc/events.php

UNLA Southern Utah Green Conference & Trade Show

Washington City, Stahlie Village, Nov 2-3
www.utahgreen.com

Jubilee of Trees

Dixie Center, Nov 16-21
www.jubileeoftrees.org

Soak This Up!

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to which type you have, simply snip it from the end of the tubing and bring it in with you for replacement.

Overall, by examining your existing irrigation system and understanding all of its components will help in keeping your lawn and landscape beautiful and healthy. So, Save water. Save Money. Save time. Make the right choice, visit your local Star Nursery and talk to one of our Irrigation Specialists. We want you to deliver water to your landscape in the most efficient way possible.

For more information, visit www.starnursery.com, click on the StarNotes button at the top, look for **StarNote #900 – How Much Should I Water?** Alternatively, stop by any one of our convenient locations.

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It's Fall Clean-Up Time! - Good excuses for you to get Outdoors!

When you look out at your yard do you see leaves and debris around the base of your roses or other shrubs? Are there scorched leaves or dying branches in parts of your yard? Or, are there weeds popping up in your flower beds or lawn?

Summer is not the time to prune or trim damaged leaves because these have been providing shade for the newer growth that has been sheltered by this dead or partially dead foliage. Fall – Now - is the time to do this. The same is true with your evergreens that may be too wide or large, and in need of some trimming before the windy season returns.

If the shrubs that underwent stress and sun-scorch are hedges, then simply trim the hedge back to new growth now and fertilize to encourage more growth. The temps have cooled and the new growth will not scorch like it would have in the summer. If you did trim the damaged foliage in the summer, you may want to look at your plants again to see if you have new damage to remove.

Evergreen shrubs and trees of course do not lose their leaves in the winter. Though some pruning can be done on the deciduous plants now, it is typically best to prune these heavily in the winter when they are dormant and have no leaves. More mature evergreens may have become too large or their foliage may be too dense. Consider California Pepper trees for instance; if these are not thinned on an annual basis it becomes likely that the high winds will break off large segments of the tree leaving it with long term aesthetic damage. This damage can also challenge the health of the tree.

As for plant debris that gathers around the base of your shrubs; it is a popular conception that this is good mulch for the plant. However, this debris often harbors diseases, insects, and because is not composted



it can represent a primary method for problems to get started next year. Fruit trees are susceptible to a variety of fungi that attack and damage fruit each year and often these are hiding in the debris surrounding the tree. Roses are much the same way. Mulch is a good thing! But, what you want is fully composted, clean mulch that won't subject your valuable landscape to disease nor insects.

So get out there and rake those leaves, trim those shrubs and trees, get rid of those weeds and then apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent the weeds from coming back! Now is the time to 'Weed & Feed' your lawn and apply fertilizer to your trees and shrubs to replenish the nutrients that the summer heat and frequent watering has leached out of them.

In nice fall weather these jobs can actually be quite enjoyable. Do a little at a time, and take this time to appreciate all the beauty your landscape has to offer. You'll be amazed at how quickly your yard will respond to a little clean'n & feed'n!

Gardeners Tip

Using coffee grounds in the garden is another fun way to add organic matter to your soil. These used grounds are a good source of nitrogen for your garden. Because they are naturally acidic, used coffee grounds are especially good for acid loving plants like blueberries, camellias, azaleas, roses, rhododendrons and even viburnum.

Don't add too thick of a pile of coffee grounds however, or mold can develop. A thin layer of coffee grounds just outside of the base of the plant is all that is needed. One more added benefit of using coffee grounds in the garden is that earthworms love them. They'll feed on the coffee grounds and in turn aerate and fertilize the soil around your plants. The amount of used coffee grounds that you collect may not be enough to take care of your entire landscape, but it beats just throwing them out and adding to the landfill problem. Besides it's another way we can enjoy our gardens.

Fall Fertilizing & Mulching - What makes a soil good for plant health?

Functional soil is an ecosystem consisting of minerals, bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods, and earthworms, all interacting. Each of these performs a vital function in healthy soil. A functioning soil is able to transport nutrients to the plant, protect roots from diseases and parasites, produce hormones that help plants grow, break down pollutants, retain and improve good structure, and in the Desert Southwest, decompose organic matter in order to keep pH at tolerable levels. A balance of sand, silt, clay and organic material is also required for optimum plant health. Bacteria, kept in balance, are beneficial to soil. They consume pathogens and organic matter and produce sticky, mucus-like substances that act as glue to hold the soil together. These aggregates provide good soil structure, allowing air and water to move through it.

Because our desert soils lack these vital aspects, we need to add amendments and well balanced fertilizers in order to compensate for this. When we irrigate our plants the water actually has two negative effects. Leaching the very nutrients our plants need from the soil, and increasing the pH or alkalinity of the soil. This is why healthy landscapes require our assistance.

Dr. Q's Fertilizers are designed for desert soils. They are packed with the standard Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium your plants need for strength and growth, and the micro-nutrients like iron, manganese and zinc essential for good health. To this we have added signaling molecules that help wake up the latent fungi sleeping in our soil, and a good dose of sulfur, so vital in combating high pH.

Add to your fall fertilization program an inch or two of fully composted Dr. Q's Paydirt™ Planting Mix & Mulch surrounding your trees and shrubs, and you've added the needed organic matter to keep your soil alive. This layer of mulch also helps to keep the root system of your plants warmer in the winter in order for their growth and expansion to continue during this colder period.

A healthy landscape is not magic! It is the result of proper irrigation and

the addition of the necessary soil amendments to help create "living soil". Fall and Spring are the two primary seasons for adding these amendments. Cut your watering back for trees and shrubs to 2 or 3 days a week, and get out the fertilizer now. It's that time again!

New Product Corner

Star Nursery is proud to introduce our new Burpee Seed line! Burpee seeds have been around since 1876, supplying seeds to gardeners everywhere. Our stores are now stocked with Burpee flower, herb and vegetable seeds including the latest varieties, new hybrids, and tried and true heirloom seeds. And we will also stock seed varieties from their certified organic line that complies with USDA and state organic guidelines.

Burpee is a family owned company that takes great pride in providing seeds for its customers. According to Burpee, all seeds sold under the Burpee name are never chemically treated. They also state they have never and do not plan sell any GMO seeds.

So whether you plan to grow your seeds outdoors or indoors, we have over 300 varieties of seeds for you to choose from! Let's go play in the dirt.

Star Nursery is also introducing its new line of Indoor Gardening products. Whether you plan to start your seeds indoors, or start an indoor herb or vegetable garden, or simply grow houseplants, we've got you covered.

For those who want to get a jumpstart on their outdoor gardens we have seedling heat mats, seed starter trays and grow lights to help ensure plants get off to a great start. Those who want to grow indoor gardens we also have hydroponic growing kits and growing mediums, FoxFarm Natural and Organic Fertilizers and Ocean Forest Soil, General Hydroponics liquid fertilizers, and more. Stop by and check it out, or visit www.starnursery.com/indoorgardening.

Dr. Q's Fall Gardening Calendar

September

- Fall is for Planting! Even here in the desert. Our temperatures will be cooling soon, so plan now for the quickly approaching planting season. This is a great month to plant trees and shrubs. Soil temperatures are still warm enough to help new roots establish quickly, then get to grow and spread out all winter. Read Star Note #001 "The Planting Guide" for tips.
- When you put new plants into the ground, be sure to use Dr. Q's Planting Partners: Paydirt™ Planting Mix & Mulch, Gold Dust® Starter Fertilizer and Plant Tonic. These combine for that "best start" you want for all of your plants.
- Prepare your flower beds for winter annuals. Mix in fresh organics like Paydirt™ Planting Mix & Mulch.
- Help your summer stressed plants recover; use Dr. Q's Plant Tonic as needed.
- We have a fall vegetable gardening window that allows us another chance to enjoy fresh veggies! Plant tomatoes, peppers, beans, peas, lettuce, herbs, leafy greens, leeks, radishes, spinach, squash. Due to the shorter season, start with larger 1 gallon size plants. These will grow and produce until we have a freeze.



- Plant now for next spring and summer's harvest: artichokes, garlic, shallots.
- Buy spring flowering bulbs early for best selection, but wait to plant until cooler weather sets in. Store in a dry, cool, dark location until then. See StarNote #325 "Fall Bulbs for Spring Color" for more info.
- Divide and transplant bearded irises. This increases the blooming potential for next year.
- Adjust your controller for less frequent watering – 3 days a week for lawns, and 2 days per week for shrubs and trees. Avoid "loving your plants to death". Don't over water. Water deep, but let the soil get some air before you water again.
- It's time for Fertilizing! Remember; for plants moisten the soil first, fertilize - then water in deeply.
- Start fertilizing everything: citrus, fruit trees, roses, trees, shrubs and lawns on Labor Day and be finished by the end of the month. Resist the temptation and do not fertilize cactus, succulents and palms.
- To prevent seasonal weeds in desert landscapes with rock ground covering, apply a pre-emergent weed killer like Green Light's AMAZE. This granular herbicide is easy to apply. Use every 3-4 months to keep weed seeds from sprouting year round.

October

- October is the "pedal to metal" gardening month! We really have only two seasons in the desert, hot and cool. And October is the door to the cool season.
- This is a great month for planting most trees (other than Palms), and shrubs. Don't forget to use Dr. Q's Planting Partners. Paydirt™ Planting Mix & Mulch to amend the soil, Gold Dust® Starter Fertilizer for root growth, and use Dr Q's® Plant Tonic to prevent shock.
- There are too many gorgeous flowers at Star Nursery to name, but the Mums will be a stand out. You need to walk through and see for yourself.
- Soil preparation is important for having healthy new plants. Spade the garden beds to a depth of 8-12 inches - turn the soil over and break up the clods and add a good amount of some new compost into your flower or veggie beds. Use Dr. Q's Paydirt or Vegetable & Herb Planting Mix.

- Do not increase the chance for fungal disease on your turf by over watering or watering at night.
- Add color to your landscape. Plant cool season annual flowers. Pansies, stock, snapdragons, and calendula are among the best for providing fall and winter color.
- By late month, you should have all your cold weather veggies planted. Plant cool-season vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, radishes. You can finally harvest pomegranates now.
- Purchase burlap or other frost cloth and cactus-covers for the arrival of frost. Don't wait till the last minute when supplies are gone. This goes for pipe wrap and PVB covers as well. Be prepared for early frosts that can damage pipes and plants.



November

- Continue to plant cold hardy trees and shrubs along with cool season flowers like: Pansies, Snapdragons and fragrant Stock!
- Check your mulch. The mulch you put down this summer might be gone with the wind. Cold weather is coming and mulch really works to keep roots warm. Try shredded cedar mulch (insects hate it)!
- Cool weather will induce your roses to set new blooms. Keep spent blooms picked off. Also prune off suckers that grow up from below the bud union.
- Watering of all trees and shrubs, including newly planted ones, is cut back to once-per-week, but the watering should continue to be deep. Most cactus should be deep, but less than once a month.
- Begin checking the forecast for freeze warnings. The average first frost arrives mid-November.
- To help plants prevent frost damage, water plants the day before a predicted freeze. Moist soil will store up heat from the sun's energy and release it at night, keeping your plants warmer.
- Bring potted succulents indoors when in doubt about cold sensitivity. Protect tender plants from cold weather by covering them with burlap, N Sulate, or a plant protector bag.
- Gather fallen leaves away from shrubs. Stop the spread of disease.

This is a good time to clean those trees and shrubs of dead branches and other debris.

- Harvest Mexican limes and other citrus as they ripen. Don't leave them to freeze on the tree as cold weather approaches.
- Fertilize winter lawns to maintain good color. Dr. Q's Winter Gem® is an excellent choice.
- Spray Prickly Pear, and Cholla cactus who's pads are covered with a white cottony substance (cochineal scale) with a strong spray, but low volume of water, using a "shut off valve" attached to your garden hose, will remove much of the white-waxy coating. Then apply an insecticide like Green Light's Organic Neem Oil to prevent their return.
- The interior of your citrus trees should be kept free of unwanted water sprouts, and the base from suckers. These won't produce fruit. Keeping the inside clean makes harvesting easy.



- Groceries are expensive! Now is the time to plant beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chard, collards, endive, lettuce, mustard, parsley, peas, radishes, rutabaga, spinach, and turnips.

Flower Carpet Roses



A common question for our sales staff at Star Nursery is “Can you show me a plant that can take a lot of sun, is low-litter, flowers most of the year and doesn’t require much in the way of maintenance?” That just sounds too good to be true, but here is a tough ornamental that stands up to that list of requests – and it

is actually a rose! Flower Carpet roses, after 30+ years of breeding, have become a great choice for the southwest desert. They tolerate sun, heat, alkaline soils and because of their compact growth habit they endure our hot desert winds.

The glossy, green foliage and masses of blooms make Flower Carpet a great choice for any landscape. They range in height from 2 - 4 feet and can be 3 – 6 feet wide. Homeowners use them along pathways, in pots or other container plantings or to fill large color beds. In commercial use they are a great substitution for ornamental shrubs in parking lot medians and are smartly used as a groundcover planting. This rose variety works well when planting on a slope because it is a sturdy plant for erosion control. They are

also creatively planted as a cascading plant to grow over a wall or fence. As with any rose at least 5 hours of sun is best for health and bloom production. So planting in deep shade is not recommended. In Las Vegas, afternoon shade will keep this rose looking its best through the hot summer months but it isn’t necessary for survival. In cooler climates like Saint George Flower Carpet roses will endure full sun. A great example: the roses in the St. George Blvd streetscape – they look good almost 10 months out of the year!

The unique root system of this rose allows for better water uptake. The fibrous roots are near the surface and utilize light, daily watering. The deeper root system is what keeps it flourishing in the dry summer months. Proper drainage is a must for any plant in the rose family. Amend your soil by adding Dr. Q’s Paydirt Planting Mix & Mulch and check to see that the soil in your desired location doesn’t hold water. Although Flower Carpet roses are more disease resistant, overhead watering will still result in the same old mildew problems that occur with any rose when watered that way. Choose drip irrigation or deep watering to properly water this plant. Just like bush roses, prevention is key. In late January, treat them with Volck Oil and Liqui-Cop Dormant Spray to keep pests and disease at bay.

There are a variety of color choices for Flower Carpet roses. Scarlet and red are the most commonly used shades and are often used as a

substitution for Red Meidiland roses. White, pink, coral and yellow shades are also available. Nice combinations of these colors really work. Try pink and yellow, yellow and coral or red and white. There are specialty colors like Apple Blossom and Pink Supreme that are quickly becoming favorites.

Maintaining Flower Carpet roses really couldn’t be easier. A little trimming mid-spring through late fall will keep this rose tidy and blooming. Add a little fertilizer like Dr. Q’s Rose Food every time you lightly prune or shape your roses. This gives them that added food they need for health and flower production. Prune Flower Carpet roses in late January or early February. Reduce them to 1/3 of their size and strip all of the leaves from the plant. Apply Dr. Q’s Rose Potion at this time. It is a granular fertilizer that will wake-up your roses and give them the energy they need for early spring growth.

Next time you are in your neighborhood Star Nursery, ask a sales representative to direct you to the large selection of Flower Carpet roses. It is definitely a landscape plant that is low-maintenance, tolerant of the desert heat and rewards you with abundant blooms from spring until late fall.

REMINDER January and February: Star Nursery offers fantastic FREE seminars that teach you how to properly prune, fertilize and care for roses to get them in shape for spring.

Utah Star Nursery 1145 W. Sunset Blvd. St. George, UT (1/4 mile west of Bluff St.) (435) 688-STAR (7827)

Locations: 385 W. Telegraph Rd. Washington City, UT (1/2 mile from Green Springs Dr. & the 15) (435) 986-0820

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