

OUR GARDENS GROW!

It's harvest time! Our gardeners have been rounding up the beans, tomatoes, and other wonderful delights that they have carefully nurtured and tended to all summer. Seeing a family or two up on the hillside watering at 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning was never a surprise! Hopefully, the sun will continue heating up the field of corn yet to ripen and pick!

FALLING INTO FALL

Some think that Spring is the time to plant but in Cincinnati, the best time to plant or transplant trees, shrubs and other perennials is *now*! Divide and conquer! The warm soil promotes the root growth. Chances of survival are better and you can usually find items discounted as the stores make way for Christmas. You can also find discounted items on all sorts of landscaping items so stock up for next Spring!

Other Fall "To-Do's": Don't stop watering! Plants love water and it will help carry them through the winter. Just think like a camel! Pruning trees & shrubs (insects and disease are less likely), and mulching to help with fluctuating winter temperatures, should also be on that garden to-do list. Still hankering for fresh garden delights? It's not too late to plant leafy greens (lettuce, spinach, arugula, chard), root veggies (beets, carrots, turnips, radishes), broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale and peas. All will thrive in the cooler weather and shorter days of fall.

Tools, tools, tools. Why wait until the Spring Scramble to scrape the rust, clean off dirt or sharpen mower blades? Simply remove dirt from tools, sharpen pruners and blades (or take to a hardware store to do it for you), then oil! Store in a clean, dry, space. Or here's my favorite trick: find a huge painter's bucket and fill it half full with sand. Place motor or tool oil in the sand. Throughout the year—even during summer use - keep tool heads in the sand. The sand scrapes off potential rust and keeps the tools well coated with oil.

You know those little packing bubbles that you just love to pop and pop? Well, did you know they make an excellent insulator? After cutting the sheet to fit your window, just spray a bit of water on it and stick the bubble side against the window. You may have to reapply some water but it usually lasts weeks and weeks!

Finally, check gutters, downspouts, and outdoor walk areas. Remove debris and patch cracks or leaks while the weather is still nice. Inside, clear away those items that were shoved near the heat vents or any curtains in the way. It's also a great time to change filters before turning on the furnace. And did you know you could save about 2% off your heating bill for every degree you lower it? Wow! Hot cocoa, sweaters, apples, crunching leaves, and the smell of crackling fires. May you all be embraced by the vibrant and colorful blessings of the season!

- Stephanie Sepate

*"The seasons are what a symphony ought to be:
four perfect movements in harmony with each other."*

- Arthur Rubenstein