

OCTOBER'S GARDEN CHECKLIST

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO BY Loretta Osteen



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Plumeria is well known for its striking, intensely fragrant, and spiral-shaped blooms which appear at branch tips from around April through November. Master Gardener Loretta Osteen of Tiki Island will provide an educational program on "The Fabulous Fragrant Frangipani (a.k.a. Plumeria)" on Saturday, October 18, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office.



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Most gardeners have been anticipating the arrival of the first "genuine" cool front. With all due respect to the science of meteorology, my definition of a cool front in the fall is one that gets your attention by immediately uplifting your spirit when you first walk outside in the morning!

As our summers go, the past summer was quite decent in terms of temperature and rainfall. However, I still prefer daytime temperatures to not get beyond the very low eighties.

Most gardeners are now eager (or at least far more willing) to venture out into the home land-

scape and garden. In light of this heightened enthusiasm, here are some activities for the fall gardener to consider:

Save Caladium Tubers: Caladiums are getting past their prime with the onset of cooler weather. If you plan on saving caladium tubers for another year, be sure to dig them up before the top growth disappears - those tubers can be very difficult to locate after the top growth is gone. Allow the tubers to air-dry for 7-to-10 days in a well-ventilated but shaded area.

After drying, gently remove any attached

leaves and large soil particles from the tubers then store in dry peat moss, vermiculite or similar material in a well-ventilated container. Pack so that the tubers do not touch each other. Dust with an all-purpose fungicide to help prevent decay. Store the tubers in an area where temperatures won't drop below 50 degrees F.

Plant Cool Season Vegetables: Transplants of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and a wide variety of vegetables for the fall growing season were on sale last weekend at the Annual Fall Plant Sale. They should be



transplanted into the garden as soon as possible. Seeds of beets, carrots, kale, lettuce, mustard, radish, and turnips can also be planted and cloves of garlic can be set out throughout October.

Control Cool Season Weeds:

Most lawn weeds that we see during late winter and early spring actually sprout in the fall. They are cool season weeds and, in fact, their germination is stimulated in the fall by the onset of cool temperatures. They grow during winter if temperatures stay warm enough, then produce a crop of seeds in the spring and die out when hot weather arrives

Use of pre-emergent herbicides to control cool season weeds is effective only if properly timed, i.e., they should be applied very soon after the onset of relatively cool weather conditions. Several pre-emergent herbicides are approved for lawn use and are sold under a variety of commercial labels. Check with your area garden center or feed store for available products. Always read and follow label directions.

Plant Shrubs and Trees: This is an excellent time for planting container-grown ground covers, shrubs and trees. Thanks to our mild winters, trees and shrubs planted now will have several relatively stress-free months to establish a good root system before hot, dry weather returns.

At a Glance

Plumeria is well known for its striking clusters of intensely fragrant and spiral-shaped flowers which appear at branch tips from around April through November. Plumeria is also known as Frangipani and as the Hawaiian lei flower. Plumeria can be maintained as a shrub or small tree grown in the garden or in a container on the patio.

When in full bloom, plumeria can fill a patio with a rich, heady, exotic perfume, especially during evening hours when the air is calm. The aroma lingers deep within each flower in each cluster.

There is absolutely nothing like the sweet fragrance of flowering plumeria, with fragrances of jasmine, citrus, spices, gardenia, and other delightful scents. These flowers are also treasured for their durability.

Do you already grow or have an interest in plumerias? Then plan to attend an educational program on "The Fabulous Fragrant Frangipani (a.k.a. Plumeria)" to be conducted on Saturday, October 18, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbine Park (4102-B Main Street in La Marque, Texas. The program will be presented by Master Gardener Loretta Osteen who is a longtime resident of Tiki Island.

Loretta will give a PowerPoint program covering the history and culture of Plumeria, how to use the flowers, propagation

by seeds and cuttings, and grafting, as well as storage and preparation guidelines for overwintering plumeria.

The enchanting plumeria can provide a tropical addition to almost any landscape and deserve wider use.

