We have had a taste of cool weather statewide, and some have had a frost. Now is the transition time from active growth to dormancy. Clean-up in the garden is ongoing, but we typically have a lot of plant material we can add to a compost pile. How happy and healthy you end your garden can determine how well it starts growing next spring.

November is the ideal time to plant a new tree. Soils still have some residual heat, we often get ample rainfall in fall and winter and while the trees are dormant, they can get busy putting on roots, before they have to worry about supporting leaves and new growth. Choose trees based on mature size. If you are looking for a particular fall foliage color, choosing it when it has fall color can help you determine what you want. Be sure to look up when planting a tree—avoid planting under power lines or your tree won’t be able to reach its full potential.

### Fall Management of Strawberry Pests
by Aaron Cato - October 22, 2019

It’s starting to cool down finally and the majority of the strawberries across the state are in the ground and growing. We haven’t heard of too many pest issues, which is typical for the fall months, but there are some issues that you could run in to. Remember to get out and scout your strawberries a few times in the fall, especially for insects and mites that can occasionally pop up.

Consult the [Arkansas Small Fruit Management Schedule](#) and the [Southern Small Fruits Consortium IPM Guide book](#) for more specific recommendations and pesticide use rates.

#### Diseases
**Anthracnose**
We’ve had a lot of questions this year about the potential for anthracnose to cause issues in the fall, and in general, anthracnose is not a common problem during this time. However, if your plant source has confirmed that anthracnose issues were present, you may need to apply a fungicide to further development. If you are observing anthracnose symptomology such as petiole lesions (black sunken areas), stunting, marbling inside the crown, or plant death, contact your plant source to determine if issues have been discovered. Sending samples to the [Plant Health Clinic](#) through your county agent may also be necessary.

The crown rot species, *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*, is the anthracnose species we generally deal with during the fall in newly planted transplants. Captan is the best option for control followed by Topsin M WSB. Avoid using FRAC 11 fungicides such as Quadris for control of crown rot anthracnose.
Pictures showing symptomology of Strawberry anthracnose crown Rot, including circular leaf spot and marbling in the crown due to infection. Photo Courtesy of Frank J. Louws, North Caroline State University.

**Powdery Mildew**
Powdery mildew is commonly observed on transplants but doesn’t generally translate into a real issue after planting and through the fall months. Fall powdery mildew also doesn’t increase risk in the spring where the disease can be more of an issue. Economic losses from fall powdery mildew will generally only occur in high tunnels, where Quintec, Rally, or Rhyme will provide excellent control. Avoid using FRAC 11 products or product mixtures on fall powdery mildew issues.

Powdery mildew present on strawberry leaves.

**Leaf Spot, Leaf Scorch, or Strawberry Leaf Blight**
Leaf spot disease are not generally economically important diseases during the fall months, but

the possibility of severe issues still exist. No thresholds currently exist but the typical disease pressure on a particular field should be taken into account when considering control. Control should not be considered unless prevalence is high and pressure is known to be excessive in that area. Rally is the best option for control followed by Captan + Topsin which provides good control when combined.
Strawberry leaf spot (Top), Strawberry leaf scorch, (Middle), Strawberry leaf blight (Bottom). Photos Courtesy of Michael A. Ellis, The Ohio State University.

**Phytophthora**
Some issues with root rot can pop up after planting in the fall, especially if rainy conditions persist or if plugs were poorly maintained. Contact your county agent to get samples taken and sent to the [plant health clinic](#) for confirmation. In general think about the history with your plant source and also with your specific fields when considering control. Fall drip applications of Ridomil Gold and metalaxyl for phytophthora both do a very good job.

**Insects and Mites**

**Two-spotted Spider mites and Cyclamen Mites**
Spider mites are often the most serious pest of strawberry for many of our growers. These pests feed on the underside of leaves and can quickly turn into a serious issue, particularly in the spring months. Mites often come in on plants from nurseries, and if mites are present when plugs are received, a miticide application should be used after planting. Growers should scout before or after planting and again before row covers are put over plants. A hand lens is necessary to determine the prevalence of active mite populations. This should be used in conjunction with scouting for the yellowing and burnt-like appearance of damage that they cause to strawberry leaves.

Cyclamen mites are a much less common problem in field grown strawberries, but they can originate on plugs from heavily infested nurseries. Feeding from cyclamen mites can cause leaves to appear stunted or crumpled, and heavy infestations can severely hurt plants. A 20x hand lens can be used to identify populations, but confirmation from the plant health clinic may be necessary.

Spider mite control can be achieved with a variety of products including Agri-Mek, Acramite, Kanemite, Nealta, Oberon, Portal, Savey, Zeal, and the OMRI approved for organic JMS Stylet Oil. Cyclamen Mites can be controlled with Portal.
Two-spotted spider mite adults and eggs (First, Spider mite damage (Second), Cyclamen mite damage (Third), and Cyclamen mite adult and eggs (Fourth).

**Cutworm**
Cutworms are not very common in plasticulture strawberries, but they can be a more common issue in matted-row production systems and weedy plantings. Cutworms are primarily nocturnal and feed on both the foliage and stems of strawberry plants. Damage is usually observed in small clusters with healthy plants between damaged areas. Feeding on stems can lead to reduced crown growth and significant yield losses. Cutworms should be controlled if damage is easily observed. Scout the field to determine the breath of the problem, and consider spot spraying if it is localized to one area. Spinosad and Intrepid will provide the best control, followed by Carbaryl, Bt, and Malathion. Make applications late in the evening to maximize control for this nocturnal pest.

**Crickets**
Crickets can feed on the leaves of freshly transplanted strawberry plants resulting in jagged holes, but treatment is rarely necessary and large infestations are uncommon. No threshold currently exists for crickets, and control should only be used if extremely high numbers of crickets are observed with very heavy amounts of defoliation. Consult your county agent before controlling for crickets.
Storing Tender “Bulbs” For the Winter

Tender “bulbs” are plants which develop and grow from fleshy storage structures (bulbs, corms, rhizomes, tubers, and roots) which will not survive our cold winters outside. This includes caladium, calla lily, canna, dahlia, elephant ears, gladiolus, tuberous begonias and others. Even though technically they are not all bulbs, the term bulb is used in this article for convenience. Since they are not winter-hardy in our climate, they need special treatment to save for the next growing season.

Many of these bulbs are expensive, yet easy to keep, so it is worth the trouble to dig and store the underground portions of these plants. Not only do most tender bulbs look splendid from the time their foliage emerges to the moment when frost brings the show to a close, but they are also extremely easy to store for repeated displays. Most tender bulbs can be stored dormant and dry for the winter months.

After the foliage has been killed by a frost, simply cut off the dead leaves you can even leave the bulbs in their pots. Store them somewhere that will not drop below 35 degrees Fahrenheit (about 40 degrees is ideal) a cold cellar or unheated basement is perfect. In the spring, unpot and divide them if necessary, then replant them in fresh soil and water thoroughly. Begin fertilizing when growth resumes.

Swiss Chard

While Swiss chard is an excellent edible vegetable, it also makes a very showy winter ornamental. Swiss chard is a kissing cousin of the common beet, but we grow this for leaf and stem production as an edible, but the showy stem or petiole is what makes it shine in the ornamental beds. Swiss chard is easy to grow and will last almost year-round in Arkansas, but it is particularly showy in the fall, winter and early spring garden because of its colorful stalks and large glossy leaves. The leafstalk can be a variety of colors including red, white, yellow or orange. Candy cane is a variety with red and white striped petioles.
Although Swiss chard prefers cool weather, it does not bolt (or go to seed) as quickly as many other cool season vegetables. The plant produces a small bulbous root, and if it is frozen back or cut for harvest, it can produce another set of leaves from the root system, which increases your harvest. It can suffer some top damage if temperatures get below 26 degrees. A light covering for a day or two will protect it and it should bounce back. Swiss chard can be planted from seed or transplant, but if you want it in your garden now, transplants are required. This is one plant that makes a beautiful edible ornamental.

**Collards**

Collards, one of the oldest members of the cabbage group, originated in the eastern Mediterranean or Asia Minor. These leafy, non-heading, wild forms of cabbage were first used for food in prehistoric times. They were cultivated by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and either the Romans or the Celts introduced them to Britain and France. They reached the British Isles in 400 B.C. The first mention of collards in America was in 1669, but they may have existed here much earlier.

Collards (also known as tree cabbage or non-heading cabbage) are cool-season vegetable greens that are rich in vitamins A and C and minerals. They grow better in warm weather and can tolerate more cold weather in the late fall than any other member of the cabbage family. Although collards are popular substitutes for cabbage in the South, they can also be grown in northern areas because of their tolerance to frost. Collards are close relatives to kale.

**Cultural Practices**

Plant in early spring for summer harvest and again in midsummer for fall and early winter harvest. Spacing and Depth of Planting: Sow seed 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep. Thin seedlings to 6 to 12 inches apart to allow enough space for plants to mature. Thinned plants may be eaten. Allow at least 3 feet between rows because plants become large. For early production in fall or spring, use transplants.

**Care**

If you maintain ample soil moisture during hot periods in the summer, collards will produce an abundant harvest.

**Recommended Cultivars for Arkansas are:** Georgia, Vates, Flash, Champion, Heavi-Crop, Green Glaze.

All green parts of the plant are edible and may be harvested at any time during the growing season. Plants grown 6 inches apart can be cut at ground level when they reach 6 to 10 inches in height. As an alternative method of harvesting, you can pick the large leaves when the plants are 10 to 12 inches high. This allows younger leaves to develop for later use. Some gardeners prefer the young, tender leaves and cut the inner rosette of young growth. This “loose head” may be blanched by tying the outer leaves together to keep out the sun. Frost improves the flavor in the fall.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. Are collard greens nutritious?**

**A.** They are extremely nutritious and have a high content of vitamins A and C. The taste is similar to cabbage. A light frost near harvest time improves the flavor of collard greens.
Q. How do you harvest collard greens? Should you harvest only the older, mature leaves or pull up the entire plant?
A. Collard greens can be harvested either way. However, maximum yields result if the leaves from the bottom of the plant are harvested before they become too old. The first harvest generally occurs after 60 days.

Q. The stems of my collard plants rot once foliage is removed. The decayed area smells foul.
A. This is bacterial soft rot which enters through the broken areas where the leaves were removed. This can be controlled with a spray of fungicide containing copper sulphate or copper bordeaux mix at harvesting.

Many home gardeners are growing vegetables year-round now outdoors. With the availability of season extenders, or just some ingenuity of creating protection for the plants, they can take even the coldest of temperatures. Most cool season vegetables will be able to tolerate temperatures to about 28 degrees without protection, but will need to be covered if temperatures are lower, or if it is a clear, still night.

Overturned boxes, flower pots or small high tunnels can add the protection you need. Many of these cool season vegetables actually taste sweeter when grown in the cooler months. Some vegetable transplants are still available, so plant soon and keep them watered and fertilized and you can be harvesting vegetables all winter.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Sherri Sanders, County Extension Agent - Agriculture
ssanders@uaex.edu
501-268-5394

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Holiday Gardening and Decorating

The holidays are upon us, and thoughts of sugar plums are replacing gardening ones. While our focus may be more indoors, it is also the season for giving and receiving. Holiday plants are a welcome gift to give and receive and can add color and interest to your holiday decorations. With a little TLC they can also linger, long after the season has passed.

The red poinsettia still reigns supreme among flowering holiday plants. Yet, poinsettias are more than the traditional red, flat-bracted blooms. Today, poinsettias come in a range of colors, including shades of red, pink, white, yellow, and purple. There are speckled ones and curly flowered ones called Christmas Rose. They come in the standard four inch pot, or in miniature or large tree forms. There truly is a poinsettia for every home.

If you want to branch out, there are other plants besides poinsettia that can add cheer to the inner landscape. Other choices include amaryllis, anthurium, azaleas, cyclamen, Gerber daisies, holiday cactus, Kalanchoe, orchids and paper white narcissus.

When receiving a holiday plant, you need to know something about plant care, to keep it attractive the longest. With poinsettias, give them fairly bright light and even moisture. Avoid dark areas with drafts. The new varieties have been bred to hold their color for months, and can add color long after the holiday season. While they can re-bloom for another season, it is best to start with a new plant each year. Enjoy them while the color lasts, and then add them to the compost pile.

Amaryllis are sold from the dry bulb stage to the bloom stage. For the longest enjoyment, start your own bulb or choose one just beginning to show color. If they are in full bloom when you get them, they may not last too long. The bulb can linger for years and re-bloom each season, much easier than with most other blooming seasonal plants.

Anthurium is a rather new addition to our indoor plant repertoire. The Hawaiian flowers have the right colors to choose from-red, white or pink spathes of color, which can last for months. Some people use them as a green houseplant after bloom, since it is difficult to re-bloom them. Let them dry out slightly in between watering.

The florist azalea is different than those we plant outdoors. Keep it cool and in indirect bright light and it too can last for four to six weeks. While many gardeners attempt planting these outdoors, many don't survive the winter.

Cyclamen plants come in a range of reds, pinks and whites. These plants grow from small bulbs called corms. They prefer cool temperatures, and will decline quickly if kept warm day and night. They prefer bright light and even moisture-too much water can cause the bulbs to rot. While many toss the plants after bloom, they can re-bloom with proper care. As the foliage begins to die back, withhold water for a few months. After a rest period, gradually begin to add water. When you see signs of new growth, increase water and sunlight.

Gerber daisies are a semi-hardy perennial in our outside garden, but can last several weeks indoors as a potted plant. Coming in a wide range of colors, they prefer to be kept on the cool side with plenty of sunlight.
Holiday cactus are also readily available. While some call them Thanksgiving or Christmas cactus, these blooming cactus can give enjoyment year after year. Once it is in bloom, it will last longest in indirect light with even moisture. Leading up to bloom it needs cool nights and sunny days.

Kalanchoe is a succulent plant with a long blooming cluster of flowers. Flower color ranges from reds and oranges to yellows and whites. They like short days and long nights and warm, dry conditions. Don't over water this plant.

You may not think of orchids during the holidays, but what showier blossom can you think of that will last for six to eight weeks with very little care. They can also live to see another day, if you so choose.

And last but not least, paper white narcissus. These lovely forced clusters of white blossoms often come artfully arranged with greenery and berries. Like the amaryllis, they are available in all stages, from dried bulbs to blooming plants. Enjoy them while they last, and then move on to something else. Re-blooming is not advised.

The holidays are upon us, and who wouldn't welcome a blooming plant? While the care of these plants isn't difficult, re-blooming may be, and in most cases is not worth the effort. To ensure the flowers last the longest, in general, keep holiday blooming plants in a cool room, with bright, indirect light. Make sure you have an even supply of water—but avoid over watering, which is most common. Extremely warm rooms can cause flowers to fade quickly. Try to have at least a slight differential from day to night temperatures. With so many choices to choose from, why not select several. With just minimal care, these seasonal favorites are sure to add a boost to any holiday decor.