



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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October 2001



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Garden Tips

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Fall Lawn Care

If your soil is hard and dead, bring it back to life this fall with Natural Guard Grass Clippings Decomposer. This product contains humate, the active ingredient in a compost pile. Humate turns grass clippings, thatch and debris into organic material for your soil.

It is beneficial, but not necessary, to core aerate before applying Decomposer. Remember that Decomposer doesn't take the place of fertilizer, but it will increase the ability of the grass to use the fertilizer applied now.

Fall Mulch

Mulch is an important part of winterizing your landscape ... especially shallow rooted perennials, roses and other heat loving shrubs like crapemyrtles and butterfly bush. Use cedar mulch or cottonseed hulls to keep soil moist and soil temperature even. The objective is to keep the soil frozen, not warm, so don't mulch too soon. Have your material ready and then wait for several freezes ... usually around Thanksgiving time.

Fall Color

Continue planting mums, pansies, ornamental cabbage and kale to give your fall garden a burst of color. Use ferti•lome Premium Pansy Food in the soil when planting and then follow up with a balanced water soluble plant food (like 20-20-20 Geranium, Hanging Basket & Pansy Food). Pansies will bloom through fall, into winter and again with your bulbs next spring. Mums are perennials and come back year after year to flower in the fall.

Poinsettias & Christmas Cactus

These traditional holiday plants need a little special attention if you want color again this Christmas.

Poinsettias need long nights to trigger the color change in the bracts. Early October is generally the time to start these artificial "nights." The 12-14 hour dark period must be uninterrupted by any light source. Even a dim light can throw off the treatment. During the remaining "day" period poinsettias need a sunny location. The process takes about 6 weeks, then you can leave the plants in bright light to finish the color change.

Christmas cactus may also be given longer "nights" to trigger bud development; or they can be kept cool. This can be achieved by leaving plants outdoors as night time temperatures drop into the 50s. Bring Christmas cactus inside to a bright location after the buds set on.

Tulips & Other Bulbs

When planning your spring garden, remember that bulbs make a more effective display when planted in groups rather than singly.