

Autumn in the Garden

by Noni Young

Autumn is arguably the best season in Melbourne. The dry hot summer makes way for cool, crisp mornings and sun filled days. The autumn colours of the Ornamental Pears and Pin Oaks which are so prevalent on the streets of Whitehorse mark the coming of winter. In nature, autumn is the season of gathering and preparation for winter and our gardens need similar attention. Here is a quick list of things to do in the garden over the next few months that the whole family can enjoy.



Introduce autumn colour



So many exotic trees have the most wonderful autumn colour. There are some fantastic small trees with great autumn colour that will suit the suburban garden. They include the Ornamental Pears, Maples, Crepe Myrtles and Cercis 'Forest Pansy'. Autumn flowering plants will also add colour. Sedum 'Autumn Joy' is a succulent that provides waves of crimson flowers throughout the autumn garden. Fuchsias are in their full glory at this time and provide the versatility of climbing, standard and shrub varieties. Many Australian natives also flower in autumn. The spectacular flowering gums, wattles, correas, banksias and grevilleas can provide splashes of red, yellow, orange and pink.

Plant seeds and bulbs



Autumn is time to plant bulbs and seeds in preparation for spring. It is also time to bring out the Cymbidium orchids from their summer hideaway.

Veggie makeover



It's time to say goodbye to the tomatoes, clean

up the veggie patch and plant out the winter veggies. Vegetables that can be planted now include broccoli, beetroot, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, onions, peas, silver beet and spinach. Parsley and coriander are a must for the herb garden.

How about some compost?



As the leaves fall it is the perfect time to start generating your own compost. The secret to good compost is the right balance between the layers of carbon and nitrogen sources. Carbon-based products include dried autumn leaves, newspaper, straw and egg cartons. Nitrogen-rich products include green leaves, fresh lawn clippings and manure. If you generate a lot of green kitchen waste you might like to set up a worm farm. Commercially available kits are simple to set up and will provide you with an endless supply of 'gardeners gold'.

Although the days are getting shorter and cooler, there are still plenty of reasons to get out in the garden over autumn. So put on the jacket and some waterproof boots and enjoy this magical time.

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