

October 2021

Since rainfall has been above average, mushrooms and puffballs have been prolific. They help to break down organic matter in the lawn. Have you had experience with slimy mold this season? it looks like scrambled eggs. It's a fungus. If you find any of these fungi unsightly, break them up with a rake. Do not use fungicides.

When night temperatures drop into the 40's move houseplants indoors. Watch the weather forecasts for frost warnings. Cover tender plants with bed sheets or paper bags. Low areas are especially vulnerable to frost. Bring houseplants indoors now.

Water indoor plants less frequently and discontinue fertilizer as plants slow down or stop growing for the winter. If plants are dropping many leaves, move houseplants closer to windows with west and south facing exposures. Supplemental artificial lights may be needed.

You can pot-up attractive foliage annuals such as ornamental sweet potato vine and coleus to bring indoors as winter houseplants. Prune back if they are too large. Take cuttings in the spring.

Rosemary can be dug up and potted now and brought indoors. Put pebbles in the bottom of the pot for good drainage and keep the soil slightly damp. If soil is allowed to dry out indoors, it will die. Put it in a cool, sunny location.

Continue to plant your spring bulbs now through early November. However, allow at least four to six weeks before the ground freezes for good root formation. Avoid planting tulips and crocuses since they are favorite bulbs of our very large population of chipmunks and squirrels. Instead plant daffodils, snowdrops, and leucojum bulbs.

Lengthen the flowering period by "double decking" that involves planting one layer of bulbs over another. First plant large bulbs, such as daffodils, hyacinths or alliums to a depth 2 to 4 times the height of the bulb. Cover these with a layer of soil, then plant the smaller and earlier blooming bulbs of scilla or grape hyacinth. Some of these early bloomers can be planted over late developing perennials.

Dig and store tender garden flowers for winter storage. Dig gladiolus corms when leaves begin turning yellow. Lift caladiums, geraniums, and tuberous begonias before a killing frost. Dig canna and dahlia roots after a heavy frost. Allow to air dry, then pack in dry peat moss or vermiculite, and store in a cool location.

If needed, the best time to apply lime is in the fall. Lime will have enough time to adjust the soil pH by next spring. In order to get the correct recommendations about lime and plant nutrients, get a soil test. Soil testing information is available at UMass Soil and Plant Tissue Testing Lab. Go to their website.

Apply limestone to soil where clematis, lavender, delphiniums, gypsophila, lilacs and dianthus are growing. These plants require a higher pH. Apply limestone at a rate of 5-10 pounds per 100 square feet every 2 or 3 years unless you have other recommendations based on a soil

test. When making a new planting, group together those plants that have similar lime requirements.