



Ecological Gardens

·Designing sustainable plant communities

Ecological Gardens Fall 2008

*"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together
For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad."*

- Edwin Way Teale

Warm greetings to new and old Ecological Gardens community members! Ecological Gardens has been very busy this summer and once again can't believe how fast it has gone by. In this newsletter please look forward to:

- Farewell to our Friend and Colleague
- Fall Garden Wrap Up
- Organic Fall Lawn Care Tips
- Preparing for Winter
- Call for Winter Designs
- Our Favorite Fall Blooming Plants
- Thank You

One of the best times of the year in Minnesota is autumn. I love that fall has the greenness and flowers of spring and summer mixed with the unique coloring of fall, foretelling of the winter to come. The brisk nights and crunch of leaves on the path remind me how grateful I am to live in a four seasons climate. Although it is cooler and the days shorter, there is actually a lot to be done in the landscape this season. Our squash, tomatoes and root crops would not be able to finish their growth without fall. Fall is a great time to plant trees, shrubs and bulbs. If you grow garlic, you know this is the time to plant your garlic beds for next year. If you've never grown garlic, try planting a clove of garlic (tip up) a few inches in the ground and cover with straw. In June you will have scapes and August you will have a bulb. As we harvest the end of our garden I am ravenous with trying to gather as much fresh food as possible for storage. Much like the squirrel in my yard I am stockpiling what I can for later use. Nothing cheers me up more than the smell and taste of my summer garden in deep winter. Fall is also a good time to reflect upon your yard and garden this year. Make notes of what worked and what needs improvement. This has been a great landscaping season for Ecological Gardens and we are quite proud of the number and quality of plants that we have put in the earth this year.

- Lindsay Rebhan

Farewell to Our Friend and Colleague Milena Klimek

As fall is a season of changes and goodbyes, so it is for one of our Ecological Gardens' colleagues. Milena Klimek has been with us for 3 years, working as a designer, landscaper, researcher and project manager. She has been a pillar of strength and energy for us over the last few years. Her adaptability, intelligence, connection to nature, humor and passion for life has made her an invaluable co-worker and friend. Milena is pursuing a new chapter in her life in Vienna, Austria. She will be greatly missed and we look forward to visiting Austria and seeing her!



Fall Garden Wrap Up

Finish your vegetable harvest (to keep plants productive until the end), clear the garden and cover the soil. Plant your fall/winter crops (beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, collards, kale, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, mustard, radish and spinach)

Seed Saving! For more information check out [Seed Savers Exchange](#)

Pot your vegetable garden herbs for indoor use.

If you till your vegetable garden in the spring, you may consider planting a green manure crop now (peas, soybeans, alfalfa, clover, oats, buckwheat, rye). This will cover the soil, add nitrogen and add organic matter to your soil.



Deadhead perennials that are going dormant. Make sure to keep attractive seed heads for winter aesthetics and prune the rest in spring.

Plant spring bulbs and dig up non-cold hardy bulbs for the winter.

Roses - Prune, mulch and cover if necessary.

Divide perennials, plant in a new space or share with friends and family.

Prune any dead or diseased branches from trees and shrubs. Remember to continue watering until frost.

Add compost, mulch/straw to the tops of perennial beds. Leave no soil bare in your vegetable garden either, a light later of straw will protect it from soil erosion and weed seed.

Protect ornamentals and berry bushes from rabbits and deer with deer netting during winter.

Clean your tool blades with vegetable oil and wood with sandpaper.

Organic Fall Lawn Care Tips

- **Get a Soil Test.** Assessing your soil health now gives you time to correct nutrient deficiencies and pH problems before spring.
- **Shred the Leaves.** Fallen leaves can smother a lawn if left in place all winter. Use a mulching mower to shred leaves into vital organic matter that you can leave right on your lawn. If you insist on bagging those leaves - please use a biodegradable bag.
- **Throw off thatch.** Compacted soil and too much thatch - an accumulation of undecayed and decaying plant matter at the soil surface - denies grass roots the air, water, and nutrients they need to thrive. (Thatching, by the way, is caused by excess fertilizing, not by mulching grass clippings.) Increasing organic matter will stimulate the soil microbes that consume thatch.
- **Mow High.** Continue to mow grass until it stops actively growing. For the final mowing of the season, cut cool-season grasses to 2 1/2 inches and warm-season grasses between 1 1/2 and 2 inches, which is just a little shorter than you should cut it during the spring and early autumn.
- No fast food. Fertilize cool-season grasses in fall with a slow-release organic fertilizer. This is also a great time to aerate.
- Reseed bare areas. Prevent weedy patches next spring by seeding now. Grass seed grows well in fall because the temperatures are perfect for cool-season grass and because it has less competition from annual weeds. Just be sure to give the lawn enough time to establish itself before winter weather hits.

Source: Organic Gardening

Preparing for Winter

- Build your Cold Frame and seed it. There are many designs out there, here's one [example](#).
- Empty hoses and turn off outside faucets.
- Add extra bird feeders to your property.
- Bone up on garden reading this winter and plan for your new spring beds.
- Most home scale compost piles freeze in the winter. You may consider starting a worm box inside. This is a smell free way to continue composting through out the winter months. For more information check out [Worms Eat My Garbage](#).
- Fix yourself a cup of tea and relax, now is the time for us to begin slowing down!

Call for Winter Designs

Have you thought about landscaping your yard, do you have any "problem" areas that persist no matter what you try or have you thought about wanting to add more food to your landscape but haven't found the time? At Ecological Gardens we take the time to assess your needs and your landscape in order to design beautiful plant communities that become self-sustaining. As gas prices rise and the economy tightens, it makes sense to invest in your property's sustainability, decreasing your mowing, fertilizing, cycling on-site water and providing edibles straight from the source. This is the perfect time to contact us about what you would like to plan for next year. We can provide a design for you, implement the project ourselves or divide up the work with you to save costs. Check out [what we do](#) on our website. Call or email to set up a design interview: PaulaWestmoreland, 612.588.3942 or paula@ecologicalgardens.com

Our Favorite Fall Plants

Not only do these plants give you color as the season gets cooler, they also provide winter interest in your landscape

- Solidago (Goldenrod)
- Eupatorium (Joe Pye Weed)
- Sedum (Stonecrop)
- Helianthus (Perennial Sunflower)
- Helenium (Sneezeweed)
- Chelone (Turtlehead)
- Cornus (Dogwood)
- Aronia (Chokeberry)
- Corylus (Hazelnut)



Joe Pye Weed



Red Twig Dogwood



Goldenrod

Thank you to Our Crew and Customers of 2008!

We had an awesome year at Ecological Gardens and would like to thank those who made it possible. Thank you to all of our customers who collaborated with us to make a more sustainable environment in the Twin Cities area. Thank you to our crew for your hard work, ingenuity and fun personalities! We are proud to have the most educated and knowledgeable crew out there. Thank you Andres, Dan, Geoff, Jen, Laura, Leah, Lindsay, Milena, Paula, Reed and Sean.

~Happy Fall~