

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- **Recycling isn't just for bottles and cans. Take it to the yard.**
- **Save time in spring and summer by winter pruning now.**
- **Get your pansies and violas in the ground before the window closes.**
- **Take your plants off the deer menu.**

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## Leaf Removal or Reuse

In today's age of recycling, it makes sense in an effort of conservation, to reuse as much material as possible. This not only applies to plastic, glass, and aluminum, but to other materials around your residence as well. Fall is a perfect time to recycle the leaves that are accumulating on the ground.

It is a familiar site on Monday mornings in the fall, to see brown recycling bags lining the curbs in most neighborhoods. It is a symbol of a lot of effort that was exerted the prior weekend. There are other options to save your time and money.

Today, most lawn mowers or vacuums are equipped with a mulching attachment. You can reduce a considerable amount of leaf debris by simply chopping up

the leaves with this equipment. This works best when the leaves are dry. It is recommended using a mask as this process can introduce a lot of leaf dust into the



**Save your time, money, and back by mulching leaves and turning into compost instead**

air. A large pile can be reduced to a fraction of its original size in a fraction of the time spent bagging it. Most of this material can be spread over the turf or bed

areas as a topdressing. This material has organic matter and water-holding capacity. Studies in commercial landscaping have shown that it can have a weed pre-emergent property as well. If you have a vegetable garden or remote corner of the property, you can convert it to a compost area and store chopped leaves for rich compost later in spring.

This process takes much less time and money than going to your local home improvement store, purchasing the recycling bags, spending hours filling these and dragging to the curb, and taking the pain reliever at night for your aching back. So consider recycling and putting those leaves to good use. It's free and right in your own back yard!

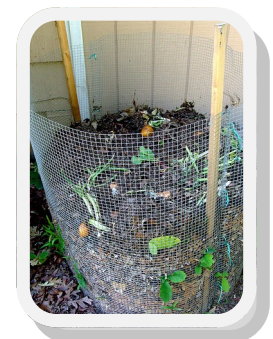
## Compost Pile, It's Heaping Good

Anyone can make a simple compost bin. Simply take chicken wire, form a loop, and attach with wire ties. Secure firmly in the ground with wood or metal stakes. Locate in a remote corner of the property.

Kitchen scraps are ideal such as coffee grounds, egg shells, and

vegetable or fruit waste. Yard waste such as leaves, grass clipping, and sticks are ideal as well.

Simply line the bin in layers, alternating green and brown waste. In a few weeks time, a rich, organic compost will be produced for use in your yard.



# Fall Color 101



October Glory Red  
Maple

Fall color makes this time of year so spectacular! There are several factors that determine the leaf color to be yellow, red, or orange.

Yellow is the most common color and has been there all summer, but the chlorophyll has been present masking it with green. Once the days become shorter and the weather becomes cooler, it breaks down and the yellow color appears. Tulip Poplars, Honey Locusts, and Green Ash all have predictable brilliant

yellow fall color.

The red or orange color is a little harder to occur. These colors are not already present in the leaf but are created by existing chemicals in the leaf. The days have to become shorter with sunny days and cool evenings for the reaction to take place. If these factors occur, the color will be vivid and widespread. If there is a lot of rainfall or warmer temperatures in the fall season, the color can be faded and not nearly as brilliant. Because of

the abundance of Red and Sugar Maples in the area, we are in a perfect spot to see a varied display of fall color.



Tulip Poplar

*The investment in dormant pruning will allow you more free time when it matters more.*

## Winter Pruning, Invest Time Now and Save Later

During the winter months from December through early March, there are several shrubs and trees that can be pruned that will eliminate or greatly reduce the amount of time necessary to prune and maintain during the spring and summer. This will allow the plant to maintain a natural

shape without having to be sheared routinely. Additionally, this improves the overall health by removing dead wood, crossing branches, and pest habitats.

Among these plants are those that have flowers that bloom on new wood (growth within one year), aggressive growing shrubs, or shrubs that have overgrown their space. The following is a list of “no-

brainers” that should be done every winter:

- Crape Myrtle
- Manhattan Euonymus
- Burning Bush
- Yews
- Hollies
- Cherry Laurel
- Spirea (summer blooming)
- Abelia
- Knock Out Roses
- Barberry
- Nandina
- Red Twig Dogwood
- Annabelle Hydrangea
- Endless Summer Hydrangea

This is not a complete list but these are typically found on residential sites in this area and provide the biggest reward for the investment of time.

So after the Super Bowl and since there is no NBA, which polls show no one cares anyway, go outside and get some fresh air and exercise. The investment in dormant pruning will allow you more free time when it matters more.



Crape  
Myrtle



Burning Bush

# Pansies and Violas for Fall Color



## Harvest Mix Violas

If you haven't planted either pansies or violas yet for fall color, the window is quickly closing. Any planting after mid-November is risky. October is ideal because it allows the plants to get established to prevent

dehydration once the cold air arrives. The key to any successful flower display is bed preparation. The area needs to be tilled deeply and organic matter added for water retention. That composted leaf material would work great here! Before planting, a balanced, slow-release fertilizer and weed pre-emergent should be cast over the surface to supply nutrients to the flowers and keep the weeds

suppressed to provide the best color show with the least amount of maintenance required. Ideal spacing is 3 plants per square foot (4" pots). Tulips bulbs can be planted within the bed to add additional color interest in spring. Recently, there is a trend moving from the pansy to the viola. The viola had a smaller flower but in mass shows a great blanket of color. Also, it proves to be hardier in the cold and not as susceptible to a grey mold disease (Botrytis) that can ruin a pansy bed.

# Daffodils, Brighten any Bed

Your spring color show can be much brighter by investing a little time and thought now in planting daffodil bulbs. These can be planted in several different landscape situations. You can plant these through the month of November for spring emergence in March/April. Plus, they are a perennial that multiply and come back every spring.

They can be planted in mass in open bed space areas or tree rings, but can be a little unsightly after the flowers are expired and the energy goes back into the bulb and the foliage drops. You can avoid the majority of the unsightliness and maintenance by planting in masses of ornamental grasses, daylilies, or other perennials that are cut back every year. The daffodils emerge

and show their color well before the perennials are growing and the foliage is concealed later by the maturing perennials. Using a drill with an extended auger attachment is a great way to make short work of the project without disturbing the surrounding plant material where the daffodils are being planted.



# Going Native

The definition of a native plant is one that grows in a certain region naturally without having been introduced from another region. In other words, before people interfered. By planting with native plantings, you can get the landscape closer to its natural heritage. If you are interested in finding out what the native plants are for the

Middle Tennessee Area, the Tennessee Exotic Pest Plant Council has an informative website ([www.tneppc.org](http://www.tneppc.org)) which details native plants and invasive exotic species that threaten the native plantings. There are a lot of native plants being used now in local landscapes and a lot of opportunity to use

more. Several nurseries in the area specialize in native stock. If possible, try not to use any plants listed on the "severe threat" list. Kudzu is an example of an introduced plant that was brought in to control erosion and has taken over the countryside.



**Kudzu overtaking trees. Don't let this be your back yard.**



## Landscape Design, Consultation, and Installation



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## Oh Deer, You Ate What?

Deer are a great part of nature, but it can be frustrating if that part happens to be your own back yard and your plants are on the menu. Though no plants are completely deer-proof, there are several that are not palatable to deer and if other options are available (your neighbor’s yard), can remain undisturbed. There are sprays, netting, and fencing that can be used to protect plants they do prefer, but these can be costly and prove to be only temporary solutions. Pansies and violas are a delicacy to deer and if you invest the effort to plant these every fall, I would recommend protecting these with netting because of the relatively smaller, confined area.

Here is a list of some perennial options you can use for spring and summer color that are deer-resistant and

require very little maintenance:

- Achillea (Yarrow)
- Agastache
- Amsonia (Blue Star)
- Baptisia (False Purple)



**If deer are a problem in your area, choose perennials that aren’t as tasty to them.**

- Caryopteris (Blue Mist Shrub)
- Eupatorium (Joy-Pye Weed)
- Siberian Iris
- Lysimachia clethroides (Gooseneck Loosestrife)
- Salvia
- Russian Sage
- Epimedium (Bishop’s Hat)
- Geranium macorrhiza
- Helleborus (Lenten Rose)
- Pulmonaria (Lungwort)
- Ferns (Ostrich, Japanese Painted, Japanese Sword)

This is not the complete list but can provide you with some alternatives that are readily available in most nurseries if deer are a nuisance.