



# THE NEW HORT THYMES

Serving Cleveland County, Oklahoma with the most up to date gardening, lawn, landscaping, and horticulture information.

## Cleveland County Extension Office

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## Brain Lawns

*Has Halloween caused an increase of zombie-attracting lawns?*

No, no. This wavy like pattern is not a sign of an apocalypse. Or an alien visitation. Or that bad luck has been bestowed upon your home. It is, however, a symptom of frost damage. We've been seeing this throughout the county after the cold weather we had in the middle of October. The damage is really not detrimental to the health of the lawn. The snaps of cooler weather cause areas of the lawn to go dormant quicker than the rest.

It's also a sign that fall is turning into winter. Perennials will be dying back. Leaves will be falling, creating a skyline of naked trees. The outdoor gardening season is coming to an end. It's time to turn our attention to houseplants and seed catalogs.

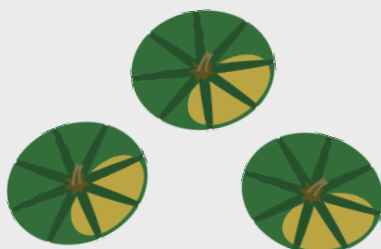
# Winter Squash Wisdom

The holidays are around the corner. With that comes all the warm, savory foods we love so much – including winter squash. Though the name might imply that these squash are grown during the colder months, they're actually grown throughout the summer. They need quite a bit longer on the vine, compared to yellow summer squash and zucchini. The difference is that these squash are harvested mature, with thicker skin and fully developed seeds. They also have a much longer shelf life and can be found at local farmer's markets throughout the colder months. There is a lot of diversity when it comes to this vegetable, both in appearance and flavors. Consider adding one of these to the holiday table.



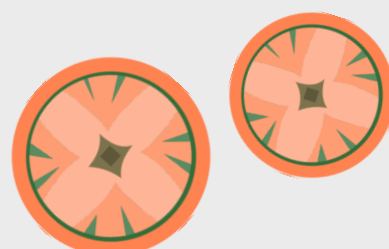
**Butternut Squash**

Butternut squash has light orange skin with a deep orange flesh. The taste is nutty and sweet, and is prepared similarly to a pumpkin or a sweet potato. The skin can be peeled prior to cooking. Try it roasted, sautéed, or used in a soup.



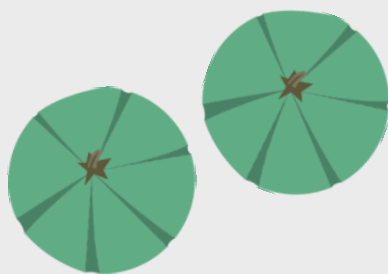
**Acorn Squash**

Also called pepper squash, acorn squash has a dark green skin with a yellow-orange flesh. It has distinctive ridges on the exterior. The flavor is sweet and buttery. It is most often baked. Stuff it with rice and meat or fill with maple syrup.



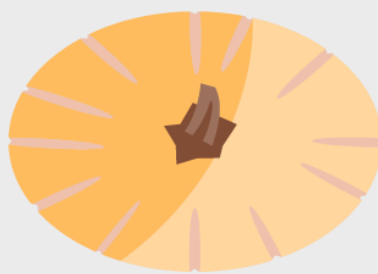
**Turban Squash**

This uniquely shaped squash has deep orange skin with mottling of yellow, white, and dark green. The flesh is pale yellow and tastes slightly nutty. It can be a challenge to prepare though, due to its turban-like protrusion.



**Blue Hubbard Squash**

Blue hubbard squash is tear drop shaped with a blue-gray skin. Its taste is similar to pumpkin and is commonly used as a replacement in cooking. Due to its mealy texture, it is best pureed. It is perfect for soups and pies.



**Cheese Pumpkin**

Also called Cinderella pumpkin, this squash is closely related to butternut and can be prepared similarly. It can be used as a Halloween decoration and cooked afterwards. The skin is pale orange with deep ridges, making it difficult to peel.



**Spaghetti Squash**

Spaghetti squash is oblong with pale yellow skin and flesh. The flavor is mild and slightly sweet. It is best baked and then shredded with forks. This creates spaghetti like strands that can be used for low carb variations of pasta meals.

## Who's Pruning My Tree?

Trees may be losing more than their leaves this time of year. If there are severed twigs on the ground, then there's a chance that something has taken residence in the trees. Especially if the twigs have a suspiciously smooth breaking point. The culprit?

### Twig girdlers.

Twig girdlers are commonly found on pecan, hickory, persimmon, and elm. They've also been reported on oaks, honeylocust, hackberry, poplar, dogwood, and some fruit trees. They feed on tender bark near the end of branches.



Females deposit eggs into the end of tree branches and then chew a complete circle around the stem, leaving only a small part attached. The twigs snap at the girdling point and fall to the ground after a strong wind. This is where young larvae overwinter for the following season. Since the twigs are girdled while leaves are still present, the severed twigs will retain brown leaves for some time. It's important to clean up the fallen branches. Discard them, either by sending them to the landfill or burning. The number of eggs normally ranges from three to eight, so this practice automatically lowers next year's populations. This should also be done in nearby woodlots if there is a history of serious damage. There are some insecticides labeled for twig girdlers, but these are only recommended if growing commercially. Sanitation is the best control for homeowners.



Photos from James Solomon, USDA Forest Service



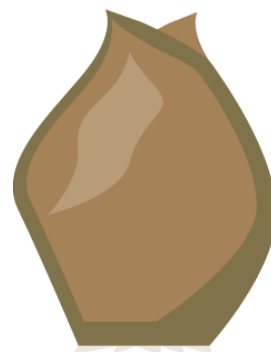
Photo from Mississippi State University Extension

## November Plant of the Month: Tulips

Plan now for beauty in the spring by planting these classic bulbs

Tulips are a staple in the early spring garden. They bloom before some trees start to leaf out, adding a relief of much needed color in the garden. So if tulips are a classic spring flower, why are they the November plant of the month? Because now is the time to plant tulips!

Select a site that is well-drained and rich in organic matter. Avoid planting in areas with standing water or rocky soils. Tulips should be planted at least 2 ½ times the diameter of the bulb. Make sure the pointed end is facing up. Cover with soil and a good layer of mulch. Squirrels may dig up and eat bulbs throughout the winter. If this issue has been experienced in the past, consider putting down a piece of chicken wire and securing it with u-shaped staples. The tulips can easily grow through the chicken wire.



**Bulb** /bəlb/: an underground organ present in some plants, consisting of a short stem surrounded by fleshy scale leaves, lying dormant over winter

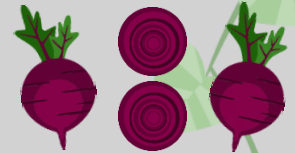
## Garden Tips for November

- If you haven't already, bring in all tropicals or tender perennials to a dry, warm spot in the home
- Prune deciduous trees in the early part of winter; prune only for structural and safety purposes
- Wrap young, thin-barked trees with a commercial protective material to prevent winter sunscald
- Apply dormant oil to scale infected trees and shrubs before temperatures fall below 40°F
- Tulips can still be successfully planted through the middle of November
- Leave foliage on asparagus, mums, and other perennials to help insulate crowns from harsh winter conditions
- Leftover garden seeds can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer until next planting season; discard after three years
- Gather and shred leaves – add to compost, use as mulch, or till into garden plots
- Cover compost piles so that nutrients do not leach during the winter precipitation
- Continue fertilizing cool-season grasses like fescue with 1 lb of nitrogen per 1000 sq ft
- Continue to mow fescue as needed at 2" and water during dry conditions
- Control broadleaf winter weeds like dandelions
- Keep falling leaves off fescue to avoid damage to the foliage
- Now is the time to force bulbs, like paperwhites, hyacinth, and amaryllis, for the holidays
- Clean and store garden and landscape tools; coat with a light application of oil to prevent rusting
- Drain hoses and bring indoors

## Eat Seasonally

In-season produce is fresher, cheaper, more nutritious, and better for the environment. These are some of the seasonal crops for November:

Beets



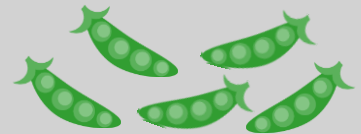
Brussels Sprouts

Collard Greens



Kale

Peas



Pecans

Persimmons



Pumpkin

Sweet Potatoes



# Upcoming Events

## November 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm to 8:00pm – Landscaping for Birds

Cleveland County OSU Extension Office, Classroom “C”, 601 E. Robinson St., Norman, OK 73071

Winter can be a tough time for our feathered friends. Thankfully, there are lots of things we can do in the garden to keep our backyard birds comfortable during the colder months. This workshop will cover plant selection to provide food and shelter, different types of feed, and other landscaping practices we can use to help birds.

This class is free and no reservations are required.

## November 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am to 11:00am – Shady “Characters”

Cleveland County OSU Extension Office, Classroom “C”, 601 E. Robinson St., Norman, OK 73071

Plants require sunlight to grow, thrive, and reproduce. This means that shade can reduce a plant’s ability to survive. In order to successfully grow plants in shade, we will examine characteristic shade plants and light restrictions. Using this knowledge, Master Gardener Rahmona Thompson will explore best practices on gardening in the shade. Rahmona Thompson is an emerita biology professor from East Central University, in Ada, Oklahoma. She has botany degrees from OU and OSU.

This event is free and no reservations are required.

## December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1:30pm to 4:00pm – Brighten Your Winter Home and Wreath Making Workshop

Cleveland County OSU Extension Office, Classroom “C”, 601 E. Robinson St., Norman, OK 73071

In this workshop, we will be covering how to care for poinsettias, amaryllis bulbs, paperwhites, and other classic houseplants. Having guests over for the holidays and want to spruce up your home? Many evergreen plants can be used to create garlands, centerpieces, and wreaths. The materials can be found in most backyards. Details on what to use and how to use it will be discussed and afterwards, students will get the chance to create their own wreaths that they can take home.

This workshop is \$5 and reservations are required. To make a reservation, call the extension office at 405-321-4774. Space is limited.

### About the editor...

Courtney DeKalb-Myers has been the Cleveland County horticulture educator since August 2018. Her position handles homeowner inquiries, master gardener advisement, and other horticulture education programming throughout the state. She is originally from Norman, Oklahoma and developed a passion for gardening at a young age. She went onto study horticulture at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater with an emphasis in entrepreneurship. After graduating from OSU, she moved to Raleigh, North Carolina to attend NC State for graduate school. Her research was heavily focused on vegetable production, specifically processing tomatoes for a local salsa product. The emphasis on local products motivated her to move back to Oklahoma and she is so excited to now serve the town that raised her.

