



**Dear *Extension's Successful Gardener* E-tips Subscriber:**

Visit *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center this week at the Southern Ideal Home Show. The show runs Friday, September 21, through Sunday, September 23, at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center will be one of the show features, with Cooperative Extension horticulture agents and Master Gardeners on hand to answer your gardening questions. Visit us in Dorton Arena. For information: [www.successfulgardener.org](http://www.successfulgardener.org) or [www.southernshows.com](http://www.southernshows.com).

Subscribe to our printed newsletter by visiting [www.successfulgardener.org](http://www.successfulgardener.org) or by calling (919) 513-3112. The October issue features top-performing annual bedding plants, from All-America Selections trials at the JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh.

**Gardening Tips for September**

**Dealing with Drought**

- Gardening has slowed down tremendously due to the drought. There is still time for planting turnips, spinach and lettuce in the piedmont but the current moisture conditions are not conducive to gardening. If you are going to use supplemental water, try planting in a shallow furrow. Wet the soil before planting. After planting, wait a few minutes for the water to soak down. Lightly cover the furrow with dry soil.
- The temperatures are right for planting fescue but the moisture isn't there. In addition, water is in such short supply in many municipalities that it shouldn't be used for starting a lawn. If it rains in the next couple of weeks, and you are in a location where there aren't water restrictions, you can attempt to plant fescue. Most likely you will have to wait until temperatures start approaching 70 degrees F in the spring and plant then. The early spring is the second best time of the year to plant cool-season grasses. Some years it won't work, but it is worth trying if you have bare ground.
- To keep drought-stressed turf grass alive during water restrictions, apply one inch of water per month. This will keep grass crowns hydrated and chances for survival are good.

- For the most part, insects and diseases haven't been very active. If you live where fire ants are a problem, you can expect them to explode after a good rain if we ever get one. They should still be foraging enough for bait to be effective. Grasshoppers are on the move hunting for green foliage. Fall armyworms will likely be a problem in parts of the state, if there is any green grass for them to eat. If you have a green lawn and it starts disappearing, fall armyworms may be the culprit. Treat with a pyrethroid.
- Trees that have lost their leaves in the last month or so can be evaluated in the spring. The maples, poplars and dogwoods will likely come back in the spring. Hickories and elms have had small limbs to die but should come back. Sweet gums have some mortality. The hardest hit trees so far have been the red oak and the black oaks. They may not come back but if they have just died, they won't become dangerous until next year so you can wait until spring to evaluate them.
- Treat for grubs in the lawn with a product containing trichlorfon. This will prevent Japanese beetles next summer.
- Divide and replant spring-flowering bulbs this month.
- Lime is not a fast-acting product. Do a soil test now and apply recommended amounts of lime so the soil will be in good shape for next season's plantings.
- Plan to bring houseplants and tropicals indoors when temperatures dip below 50 degrees F. Move plants into partial shade for a week to condition them to lower light levels indoors. Prune them, if necessary, to a manageable size. Give them a good bath in soapy water or spray with insecticidal soap to keep insect pests from moving indoors with them.
- Keep an eye on cole crops such as cabbage, collards and Brussels sprouts. If holes start to appear in the leaves, it is a good sign you may have caterpillars chewing on the leaves. Treat them early and as often as needed for good control. Handpicking works well or a product with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) as the active ingredient will target caterpillars specifically.

### North Carolina Cooperative Extension

- Learn about educational programs near you. Visit [www.ces.ncsu.edu](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu).

**Until next month, Happy Successful Gardening!**

