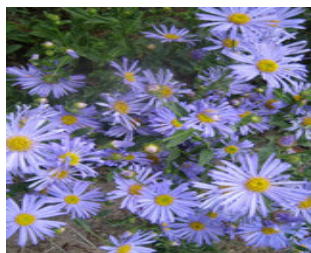


# In the Garden

Autumn is upon us and is an abundant time in the garden, with a dramatic backdrop of rich hues bathed in soft golden light. As the garden heads towards dormancy, you may think this is time to relax, but harvesting is the key task of the season and will keep you on your toes well into October. The ripening fruit needs collecting, there are squashes and courgettes to collect and ripened seed heads provide us with a potentially fabulous display for next year. In addition to this you can 'harvest' more plants from your perennials. All in all you get to proudly reap the fruits of your labour earlier in the year.

## Tips and Hints

**1** Plant bulbs! I hardly need remind you that this is the season to plant your spring and some summer flowering bulbs. If you haven't got space in the border, how about a few pots. Bulbs are self contained units and can therefore be crammed closely together in pots, without causing competition for nutrients etc. Just be sure they don't dry out and you should be fit for a fabulous spring display. If planting in the bed, fork over the area to be planted to loosen the soil. For something a little different try *Gladioli x byzantinus*, *Allium Nectoscordum Bulgaricum* or *Eucomis Bicolor*.



Aster v. Frikartii x monch'

**2** September is a good time to implement new planting schemes in the garden, second only to spring. The soil is still warm and you have a good idea of where those gaps were in the summer border so make the most of this window of opportunity. Plants will lay down a strong root growth before the winter dormancy period and have a head start for growing away in the spring.

**3** Mulch your borders with organic matter to afford winter protection and give the garden a boost of nutrients before their dormant season. Compost, leaf mulch or soil improver can be made or purchased. Be generous, allowing a 2-3" covering over any bare areas of soil. Avoid



Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm'

mulching the crowns of perennials or the stems of shrubs, as this could promote rotting.

**4** Clean your greenhouse inside and out with a suitable detergent. This is an annual task for this time of year and aims to eradicate any pests or diseases present. It also ensures you maximise the light levels in the greenhouse for any tender plants you intend to over winter. Don't forget all pots, benches capillary matting or other equipment housed in the greenhouse will benefit from the same treatment.

**5** Increase the amount of plants in your garden for free. Lift and divide congested clumps of perennials in



Helenium 'Moorheim Beauty'

► This collection of late summer flowering perennials are guaranteed to give a blaze of late summer colour. They are statuesque plants giving up to a metres height to the back of a sunny border. Plant in drifts of three, five or seven to create a naturalistic feel.



# ACANTHUS

## GARDEN DESIGN

**Chelsea Medal-winning Design  
Consultancy  
Project Management**

For a free initial consultation, please contact:

Tel: 01223 864102

Mobile: 07776145899

E: [contact@acanthusgardendesigns.com](mailto:contact@acanthusgardendesigns.com)

[www.acanthusgardendesigns.com](http://www.acanthusgardendesigns.com)

September. You really only need a few leaves clinging onto a healthy bit of root stock to generate a brand new plant. Plant into its new location, or a nursery bed to overwinter. The plant will bulk up slowly over late autumn/winter and provide a fine display for you next summer.

**6** Lift begonia, gladioli and dahlia tubers. Once lifted, clean and ensure the removal of any pests and discard any with signs of disease. Store in dry compost in a cool, frost free dry location over winter: your garden shed is ideal.

**7** Check fruiting trees for disease and remove any affected fruit. If you haven't done so by now, thin out your fruit to promote larger, juicier fruiting potential in those that remain.

**8** Another harvest to be dealt with is the fruit of your annuals and perennials. Collect seeds during a dry

period, when the seedpods have opened and the seeds are obviously ripe. This is easy to identify in many cases as the seeds will fall away from the pod when turned upside down into a paper bag or envelope. Label and store in an airtight cool dry position until you are ready to plant up in the spring.

**9** October is the time to clear vegetable plots of weeds and spent crops. Sow a crop of green manure (e.g.) winter tare, grazing rye or field beans to protect the soil over winter. Cut down and dig into the bed around late winter to add to the organic matter in the soil.

**10** The vegetable garden can become a barren wasteland over the winter. If you haven't planted green manures, cauliflower or broccoli, you could try some winter salad crops. Mizuna, lettuce 'Winter Density', 'Little gem' or 'Avoncrisp'. The tender leaves will need protection from frost: try a cloche or a tunnel of

garden fleece.  
*Happy gardening!*

From Claire Morris at  
Acanthus Garden Design  
01223 864102

### *Design Tip*

When clearing the summer borders, spare those perennials that will have beautiful autumn foliage colour or will offer striking winter skeletons. Leaving your now golden grasses to overwinter makes a stunning sparkling display touched with winter sun and frost. Eryngium, Rudbeckia, Echinacea and Sedum are all good winter interest candidates.