



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
with Tim Goom

Autumn: Perfect for planting

Summer colours will be fading from your flower beds as sunset tones creep into the leaves overhead. Whilst autumn can feel like it's time to shut up shop on the gardening front, the opposite is true. Now is the perfect time to review your planting design.

Technique

Transplanting

As temperatures drop, the metabolism of plants also slows, which means it's a good time to transplant a plant or tree better suited to a different position with more sun or shelter. Try and take as much of the rootball with the plant as possible using a sharp spade. Prune back foliage of deciduous trees to compensate for any root loss. Do your research- some plants are readily transplantable, and some are not. Generally larger trees, taller established shrubs and plants with a long tap root will not transplant well.

Trimming

As winter approaches, plants retreat to conserve energy. Pruning will encourage stronger growth in spring, control the spread of any disease and allow more light in to the garden over winter. Pruning is something of an art form, take care to consider when and how the particular plant is best trimmed to avoid damaging potential spring buds. A light pruning every autumn will suffice for deciduous trees and shrubs - evergreens won't generally need pruning unless damaged branches need removing or shaping is required. Calling in an arborist for bigger more challenging trees is a great investment to ensure the tree is maintained safely

Planting

Whether you are planting vegetables, flowers or shrubs - the first step is to ensure the soil is prepared properly with mulch and fertiliser. The size of the hole dug will need to correspond to the size of the plant and it's roots. Roots need enough space between the soil particles to grow and spread so check the soil isn't too compacted. Whether it is a significant root ball of a tree or a small root of a flower, the roots and soil will need to be gently teased out before planting.



Soil added to the hole after planting will protect the plants stability but should not be compressed too firmly. Then it's all about the right amount of watering!

Design

Although the winter garden can seem drab compared to the bright hues on show throughout spring and summer, there is still an array of vibrantly coloured plants which can boost the colour palate in your landscape.

- Cold hardy flowers such as Hellebores, pansies, marigolds, ericas and cornflowers are shade resistant and can be potted or planted in the garden to add a splash of colour.
- Ligularia, Sedums, Mahonia and Pseudowintera colorata have bright and interesting foliage and/or stems which will maintain interest during the bleak months.
- Let's not forget the edible winter garden- time to plant celery, radishes, brassicas and herbs such as rosemary, thyme, mint and parsley. These will jazz things up both in your garden and on your plate.
- As well as considering what to plant, think carefully about what not to plant. Sorbus acuparia is a deciduous tree currently having a tough time with fire blight.

Do you need more planting for privacy, screening or wind protection? Can your hardscaping be renovated to maximise your enjoyment of your outdoor space? Autumn is the perfect time to do this to ensure your fabulous new outdoor space is ready to enjoy by the time the mercury starts to climb. The number of decisions can feel daunting but our experts at Goom Landscapes are on hand to advise you on all aspects of planting design and maintenance to create your perfect outdoor space.

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