

# URBAN DIRT

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## AUTUMN IN HOUSTON



Is certainly not the autumn that I experienced in the Northeast of my childhood. Around September the mornings started to be a little crisp and by Halloween there was even a chance of snow, but for Houstonians, now is the second planting season of the year. The warmth of the

harvest sun seems just as warm as it is in summer, but there are opportunities to sow plants that wouldn't normally stand our summer heat.

Here are some seeds that may be planted now:

Alyssum, Bluebells, Columbine, Coreopsis, Daisy, Delphinium, Four o'clock, Gerbia, Larkspur, Mallow, Nasturtium, Onion seeds, Petunia, Pinks, Poppy, Radishes, Snapdragon, Stocks, Sweetpea, Turnips and Viola.

You can set the following plants starting in September:

Beets, Cabbage sets, Calendula, Chrysanthemum, Dwarf Dahlia, Hollyhock, Parsley, Petunia, Potatoes, Tomato sets, Verbena, Violets, and Zinnia.

September is also a good time to plant these bulbs:

Allium, Amaryllis, Anemone, Calla, Dahlia, Garlic, Iris, Lily, Narcissus, Ranunculus, Saffron, and Shallots.



### SEPTEMBER MEETING: 9/19/95

Executive Board 5:30 p.m.  
Dessert and Coffee 6:30 p.m.  
General Meeting 7:00 p.m.

### SUBJECT:

"The Garden and Health"

Speaker: Dr. Joe Novak

### OCTOBER MEETING: 10/17/95

Executive Board 5:30 p.m.  
Dessert and Coffee 6:30 p.m.  
General Meeting 7:00 p.m.

### SUBJECT:

"Wild Flowers"

Speaker: To be Announced

Please remember: Bring plants to sell!



## My Corner of the Garden...

by Lois Sutton, MG President

*An Aphid bold am, I,  
Which is, I presume, why  
I search for tender verdure--  
It's the only thing will  
nurture, a rascal that's so sly!*

...Grace Tabor

*Wonderdays and Wonderways through  
Flowerland*

According to several recent publications collecting antique garden ornaments is now a trend. This trend will have to pass me. I do, however, find myself attracted to old garden books. I don't have a large collection, and there's no particular theme. The books range from an 1858 edition of Dr. Asa Gray's *How Plants Grow* to a 1940's botany text in Spanish. Many of the books were written for children.

*Wonderdays and Wonderways*, a 1916 book, takes you on a summer adventure with Betty and Billy, two orphans, and Platkin, the dog. A particularly large and beautiful soap bubble transports the trio to the tiny size of ants, or the Formicas. They are befriended by Mr. Gryllus, watched over by Princess Dulciana because they are clansmen of the Hive Providers, and transported by Mr. Libellula.

Just before sliding into this tiny world, Billy and Betty planted some morning glories. But in 11 days and 10 nights the seeds had not been able to break through the heavy garden soil in which they had been planted.

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## FROM THE ORCHARD...

By Yvonne Gibbs



This August and the last of July have been extremely hot and humid. Usually I tell the volunteers, when it gets 90+, "there isn't anyone who can take that heat and the humidity." I tell them to "wait until the weather lets up."

But several wonderful volunteers, Preston Geeland and John Pierce, have gone the extra mile to help out. They have hung in there and are continuing to do much of the regular maintenance.

The weeds are a real problem and given half a chance they rear up their ugly heads and take over any bare spot they can find. A lot of hours are spent taking out weeds. In late July the chores entailed weeding around the bases of the row of Tex Royal Peach trees and thinning out bad pears (hail damage from earlier in the year along with blight had caused some rotting of the fruit). We removed some broken limbs. We also try to water each day we work in the orchard. We recently found a lot of breaks in the lines and spent part of a morning locating them and tagging them.

Yours truly has been out of commission due to a trivial ailment called soft corns, anyone know about those? Anyway, I am on the mend and will soon be getting back in the swing of things.

John Pierce came out the third week in August and thinned the persimmons. He tied up some of the limbs that were over loaded with fruit and had been pulled down to the ground. He also trimmed some that had broken due to weight and high winds. He noted that the persimmons were starting to color which means the early ones will be ready soon. John harvested some of the late grapes.

The grapes are usually finished by September. They did well this year and produced a lot of fruit. However, squirrels and raccoons have been harvesting the fruit all year and they are feasting on everything they can get their grubby little paws on. It is a serious problem for most back yard growers and I haven't found a way to provide them enough things to eat so they will leave something for me. They even harvest the stuff before it ripens!

This looks like a good year for pecans, the trees are loaded. I can't wait until the new crop starts showing up this fall. The next Fruit Study Newsletter will be sent out in September. We are encouraging our Fruit Study members to participate with Galveston County in the Citrus Show, which is usually held at the Mall of the mainland. More on this in the newsletter.

We want to welcome Mike Peters back to Houston, and to congratulate him. He is the Editor and Publisher of **Gardening Newsletter** of the Texas Gulf Coast. This is a local newsletter which is chock full of events as well as news and information about the folks gardening here. One of the columns is a gardening events calendar. The newsletter is available by subscription. call (713) 468-8580 for details.

We also want to congratulate Fruit Study members Dr. Bob Randall and George McAfee on their good work with community gardens. Dr. Bob Randall is Director of Urban Harvest. I want everyone to know about the work that Urban Harvest does in the city. So let me introduce you by letting you read one of their news letters. There will be a copy posted on the Fruit Study Group bulletin board in the Master Gardeners room. Pick up a copy when you are at the extension center. You can subscribe to the newsletter by calling Urban Harvest at 668-2094.

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