

Getting the Garden Ready for the Fall planting



After being away at the cabin for 2+ weeks, I am feeling a bit behind in getting my garden ready for fall planting here in Phoenix. In looking over blog posts from previous years, my tardiness is self-imposed. I'm actually a bit early this year. Now it makes sense that the vegetable selection at the nursery was a bit on the light side. Well, by jumping ahead the good news is that Phase 1 of fall planting in the garden is complete. Better early than late, right?

Prepping the Garden



obelisks built by my husband

A few weeks ago, I pulled all the tired and scorched plants from the garden. Fresh, rich compost from our [compost tumblers](#) go into each of the beds while the garden awaits new plants. This is the garden rest period. A couple of basil plants and mint still remain, but most of the beds are quiet.



Here is my 2 cents on composting. We give Nature scraps and she gives us nutritious fertilizer. Garbage in, compost out. Such a great deal! To see my post on Composting 101, click [here](#). Please, please, please try composting if you aren't doing it already. Even the earthworms love this soil.

Best Nursery in town



Succulents at Whitfill

All my garden/plant shopping happens at [Whitfill Nursery](#). Truly, it is a joyful experience! If you haven't been to the location on Glendale Avenue, I encourage you to do so. In addition to a vast selection of plants, they have a sweet gift shop in an old historic bungalow that is always filled with

unique items. Shopping local is important and this family owned and operated business has been a Phoenix icon for over 6 decades.



Plant Selection

So this week during my trip to my favorite nursery, I buy the following plants:

11 tomato plants~Roma, San Marzano, Better Boy, Beefsteak~all certified Organic

12 Snowball Cauliflower

6 Green Broccoli and 6 Burgundy Baby Broccoli

2 Red Swiss chard~these are actually for the chickens

French Sorrel

6 Dinosaur (Nero di Toscana) Kale

Fennel and Italian Parsley



blooming shishito pepper

There is something exciting about bringing all these new plants home to the garden. I pack them in a wheel barrow and head to the back yard.

With gardening, unexpected surprises occur. Last spring is the first time I planted Shishito Peppers. I didn't realize they are a perennial and both plants are in bloom again!



Placing the tomato plants

Prior to digging, I place all the pots in the beds. Typically,

I will rotation plants in order to prevent soil depletion. Tomatoes tend to stay in the same bed to receive the most sun.



Having plenty of tomato cages is handy. As you may recall, I purchased more of my [favorite brand](#) of cages in the Spring. If you need tomato supports, these are a good quality and last a long time. My tomatoes this summer grew SO big and I was appreciative to have the cage structures to hold them up. Plus they break down to lay flat when storing. To see more about my Spring garden, click [here](#).

Giving my fall garden a few weeks head start should produce some interesting results. Plus with the weather still being a bit warm, my tomatoes might actually do better.

Some garden maintenance



In the past we have used PVC pipes for frames to hold up shade/frost cloth or bird netting. This is easily accomplished by bending the pipe and shoving the ends deep into the soil. Such an affordable way to create overhead frames for the beds.



Now we are building a larger, more permanent structure that spans over multiple beds. Using larger PVC pipes and connectors, the frame will span over 2 beds. Here I can drape big pieces of shade/frost cloth over entire sections. This will allow me the ability to walk underneath to work in the beds.



PVC structure being built

Every year, especially after the grueling summers, basic maintenance needs to be done The perimeter picket fence is

looking tired and requires a new coat of white paint.



Time to Clean Up

Having a garden doesn't really take a great deal of time. Planting new starters is relatively quick, especially when the soil is soft, warm and ready to use. Water and then it is time to clean up.



Good [garden tools](#) need care and I certainly have ruined my fair share of them. Cleaning off the dirt and getting them stored for the next time, lengthens the life of the tools. Having a dedicated sink in the well tower for gardening is certainly a plus. To see my potting area in the well tower, click [here](#).



There is something very fulfilling when the plants are tucked in for the night. I am dirty and sweaty and my fingernails look pathetic. But as my sign says on the picket garden gate, "Life begins in the garden."

Do you have a fall garden? I know in many places, the crops are being harvested now and gardens will lay dormant for the winter. But a garden doesn't have to be large. Containers and pots work really well for herbs and greens. Gardening is very fulfilling and takes many forms. Would love to hear your gardening goals and stories.

Mary

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