

Timely Tips for October in the Low Desert

Tip of the Month

Diseases can be spread by an insect picking up the virus while feeding on a sick plant and then carrying it to the healthy one he feeds on next. They can also be spread by well meaning humans who cut away the infected branch, but forget to sterilize the pruning shears before cutting in to a healthy branch. They can be splashed up out of the soil and on to leaves or from sick leaves to healthy leaves by a sprinkler or hose. To decrease the spread of diseases in your landscape: dispose of infected plants immediately before the disease can be spread to others. Pick up rotting fruit or dead leaves, which can be a source of disease. When in doubt, throw them out, do not compost diseased materials. Disinfect your tools between pruning cuts with alcohol or a 10% bleach solution. Apply water to the soil; do not allow it to splash up onto the leaves of plants. With plants, prevention is everything.

Climate Information for October in Phoenix, Arizona

Rainfall:

Average: 0.7 inches

Record: 4.4 inches (1972)

Temperature (degrees F):

Average High: 88.1 degrees

Lowest High: 56 degrees (1959)

Record High: 107 degrees (1980)

Average Low: 60.8 degrees

Highest Low: 82 degrees (1987)

Record Low: 34 degrees (1900,1911)

Note: Rainfall and temperatures vary widely within the valley depending upon elevation and microclimate.

Turf

- Apply one inch of water per week to Bermuda lawns
- A light application of potassium on Bermuda in the fall will enable it to come out of dormancy in the spring with greater vigor.
- Over seed established Bermuda grass lawns from mid October through mid November for a green winter lawn.

Roses

- Resume full fertilizing of established roses as the weather cools
- Watch for second season of [powdery mildew](#)

Fruit and Nut Trees - Late summer application of nitrogen fertilizer probably helps fruit sizing. This is more significant for fall ripening (navels & tangerines) than spring ripening (Grapefruit and Valencia orange) varieties.

Landscape Plants - Cut off spent blooms to stimulate re-bloom

- It is too late to fertilize freeze-sensitive plants such as citrus, hibiscus, bougainvillea, etc. However, early fall fertilization can help the recovery of summer-weary trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, lawns and flowers. Nitrogen fertilizer should be adequate. Follow with good deep irrigation.

- Cut back watering frequencies as plant needs decrease with shortening, cooling days

- Plant winter hardy trees, shrubs and vines

- Plant wild flowers

- Pre-emergent herbicides can be applied from October through early December for winter annual weed control.

Follow the package directions carefully for best results. DO NOT use pre-emergent herbicides where you will be planting seeds this season.

Don't List . . .

- Do not de-thatch Bermuda in the fall. De-thatching should be done in the summer when the grass is actively growing.

- Do not increase opportunities for fungal disease on turf by over watering or watering at night.

- DO NOT OVER WATER which will result in root rots. Allow the soil to dry out between watering.