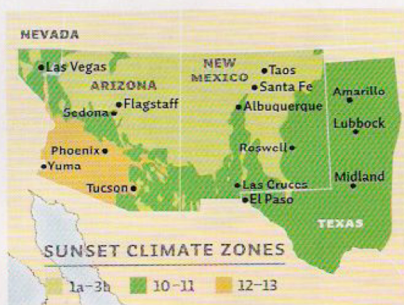


What to do in your garden September



Planning

Tour native veggie gardens Get a first-hand view (and taste) of the cornucopia of native vegetables that can be grown in the Southwest at the annual Native Seeds/SEARCH garden tour. (8–noon Sep 10; \$8 nonmembers, \$6 members; www.nativeseeds.org or 520/622-5561).

Planting

Citrus Sunset climate zones 12–13. For marginal growing areas where winter temperatures regularly dip below 30°, substitute ‘Nagami’ kumquats and ‘Eustis’ limequats for the less cold-tolerant Mexican lime. For lemon lovers, ‘Improved Meyer’ lemon, with its less-acidic fruit, can now be legally purchased in Arizona.

Fall duo Zones 10–13: To add pizzazz to the fall garden, combine black dalea (*Dalea frutescens*) and deer grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*) in a garden bed. Black dalea’s lacy leaves and small pealike purple flower clusters are the perfect foil for the upright spiky seed heads of deer grass.

Garlic This fall-planted bulb is one of the easiest crops to grow in the Southwest. Pull apart the cloves and plant each one 2 to 4 inches deep with the pointed end up. Zones 1a–3b: Plant now. Zones 10–13: Wait to plant until daytime highs fall below 95°. If you really like garlic or just enjoy reading a great story, Stanley Crawford’s *A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm* (University of

New Mexico Press, 1992; \$17) makes for pungent reading.

Night bloomers Zones 1a–3b, 10–13: The big yellow blossoms of sundrops (*Calylophus hartwegii*) and white flowers of tufted evening primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa*) attract hawk moths by the dozen and add nighttime interest to beds adjacent to evening entertaining areas. Both plants bloom over a long season, tolerate drought, and live longer if planted in well-drained soil.

Vegetables To prepare beds for planting, dig in a 4- to 6-inch layer of compost or rotted manure. Zones 1a–3b: Sow seeds of bok choy, carrots, chard, kale, lettuce, radishes, and spinach. Zones 10–13: When daytime temperatures drop below 100°, sow seeds of arugula, beets, bok choy, carrots, chard, fava beans, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, peas, and turnips.

Maintenance

Control orange dog caterpillars These ½-inch-long, mottled, dark gray and whitish caterpillars feed on citrus leaves. They hatch from round, amber-colored eggs laid by swallowtail butterflies in September, and when mature, they resemble bird droppings. Well-established citrus are only cosmetically affected, but young trees can be weakened if the damage is severe. Caterpillars can be handpicked or sprayed with the bacterial insecticide Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). But remember, every caterpillar you kill in the fall is one less swallowtail butterfly next spring.

Shopping

Cactus tools For weeding in and around cactus and sharp-spined succulents, nothing beats really long tweezers. To keep prickly pear more compact, use a long-handled saw designed specifically for cactus and prune after the warm season. A good source for tools is the aptly named Cactus Pruner (www.cactuspruner.com or 303/232-8788). —SCOTT CALHOUN

Tip from the test garden

HOW TO SOD A LAWN
Fall is the best time to install lawn from sod, because grass roots have an easier time getting established during cool weather. Pick up sod (or have it delivered) in the morning and start installation right away to complete planting the same day.



STEP 1 Unroll sod strips over well-moistened, amended soil, pressing edges together where they meet. Use a sharp knife to trim strips to fit sod around paving or irregular areas.



STEP 2 Roll the newly laid sod with a roller half-filled with water to smooth out any uneven areas and to press the roots firmly into the soil.