



## FALL PLANTING

There is no better time to plant than in the fall. Fall planting takes advantage of favorable air, soil, and moisture conditions needed to sustain plants through their first critical growth-year.

Although the fall planting season begins in August, we recommend waiting until mid-September to determine if above-normal temperatures in our area will persist.

Autumn planting has many benefits. As the days become shorter and temperatures become cooler, plants shift their energy into new root growth.



The combination of warm soils and cooler temperatures help to stimulate root growth. Plants that develop a healthy root system in the fall have an advantage over those planted in the spring.

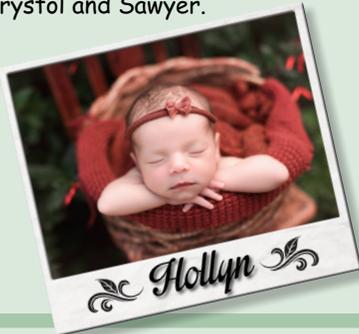
Planting in the fall is less stressful on the plants and offers a longer period for plants to adapt before being subjected to high temperatures during the summer months.

Another benefit of planting in the fall is that plants will require less water. Once the plant materials become established, you should be able to return to regular fall and winter watering schedules.

(continued on back)

## Welcome Hollyn!

We are ecstatic in welcoming Hollyn Quinn to the EC Family! Hollyn graced us with her presence in June and has been a joy to parents Ronnie and Kacy, and siblings Dylan, Bristol and Sawyer.



## PREPARING FOR WINTER

Fall has just begun, but winter is right around the corner. Although winters in Southern California are typically mild, it is still necessary to ready your landscaping for the seasonal changes.

Now that the peak growing season is winding down, it is time to assess for any damages to the landscaping caused by heat stress brought on by high temperatures and watering restrictions.

The following maintenance practices are the basis for a healthy landscape that can help guide trees and plants through winter and into spring.

Several of the communities that we manage include large turfgrass areas. Turfgrass is vulnerable to heat stress during the hot, dry summer months because of its need for daily moisture replacement. As a result, the soil can become compacted, which substantially reduces the availability of oxygen to the plant's root system.



Aeration opens up the soil, which promotes strong root growth by allowing water, oxygen, and nutrients to reach the root system. Fall is the ideal time to aerate while the turf is still green and as morning and evening temperatures begin to cool.

Fall is also the perfect time to clear any obstructions, such as leaves, debris, or weeds that may be blocking the flow, from the catch basins located in the landscape and turf areas. This prevents potential water puddling, which can lead to disease or root damage.



Fertilization in the fall has many benefits (see Fall Fertilization article). It replenishes soil nutrients and also promotes root growth. Not only does fertilization help to carry turfgrass through the winter months, it also ensures a healthy, vibrant appearance in the spring. Fertilization is also an important element for trees and shrubs.

Tree and shrub areas watered with overhead spray heads can be fertilized the same as you would a turf area, through the broadcast method. However, any areas using a drip system should be fertilized using an inline system. The alternative is to apply fertilizer using a hose sprayer attachment.

While we are on the subject of trees and shrubs, fall is also the time to cut back dead material on deciduous



plants such as *Lantana*. Plants and groundcover in this category start to lose their flowers as they enter dormancy, also losing their appeal.

They often require the removal of the dead stems, branches, and spent flowers. Other varieties such as day lilies are regularly cut back during the fall, even though the plants are still green.

The same is also true for trees. Removing dead branches and general reshaping is best done for most deciduous trees in the fall when they are dormant. And late fall is the optimum time to prune and shape evergreens and conifers when temperatures are milder.

Irrigation system maintenance is an ongoing process, especially for some of the older systems. We constantly monitor main shutoff valves, remote control valves, sprinkler heads, and drip system emitters.



Frigid winter temperatures seldom occur in Southern California. However, when they do, the backflow prevention devices are the most vulnerable. We always recommend the installation of insulation blankets around the backflows to minimize exposure and to prevent potential damage.

## FALL FERTILIZATION Paying it Forward into Spring

Plants and lawns look their very best when given proper care. Fertilization ensures the health, productivity, and vibrance of your landscaping. It is also one of the most neglected landscaping maintenance practices.

Fall is the most essential time of the year to fertilize, when temperatures begin to cool and plants and turf growth starts to slow down. Timing however, is crucial. It is important to get an application of fertilizer down before the first frost, which typically arrives in mid- to late-November in our areas.

Fertilizer delivers needed nutrients back into the soil, which benefit plants on many levels, including promoting a strong root system. Plants need a strong root system to store food, which they produce in their stems, leaves, and grass blades. These stored nutrients are carried over for use by the plants in the spring.

Other benefits of fall fertilization include helping plants recover from summer heat stress and damage, as the summer heat can take its toll on plants, especially turfgrass. It also aids plants to resist pests and disease.

Late fall fertilization is also promoted as a means of prolonging the color of cool-season turfgrasses into early winter, without increasing the chance of winter injury and disease.

Fertilizer selection is a matter of choice. There are several good organic and synthetic fertilizers available at local home garden centers and building supply stores.

We use a fertilizer mix that is designed to meet our need and the needs of our clients. Our experience has shown that a combination of fast and slow release fertilizers will not only benefit plants through the fall and winter months, but will also help to green-up turfgrass in early spring.

(Fall Planting, continued from front)

Precipitation, which is more likely to occur in the fall, will also reduce the need for water and thus lower watering costs.



Purchasing plant materials at the end of the growing season also has its advantages. Nurseries and home garden centers typically reduce prices to move their inventory for spring.

Before you embark on your plant shopping spree, make sure that you are familiar with the plants that you have selected. Most of the plants have entered their dormancy period and may not appear 100% appealing to the eye. Knowing what to plant and what to look for will be rewarding in the end.



Finally, fall planting offers additional time to devote more direct care for the new plants

before the peak of the growing season begins. This added attention helps to increase the prospects of having a successful landscape experience.

## PAYING ATTENTION TO DETAIL

As our name states, Environmental Concepts is a landscape management company; owing to the individualized services we provide. No matter what size of project, we go beyond the basic tasks of standard maintenance practices. As a result, our customers have high expectations of the level of services that we offer.

Delivery at this level of quality requires a landscape staff with thorough knowledge of local conditions, experience with a diversity of plant materials, and a proficient landscape maintenance skillset.

The commitment for accountability with all members of our maintenance team results in a quick response to our customers' needs, which results in a higher level and quality of service. This is accomplished through hard work, employee training, and continuous improvement in field efficiencies.

Early maintenance practices



were primarily based on turfgrass and plant material growth patterns, which are still important factors today. However, in order to meet the challenges of changing climate patterns and watering restrictions, new methods for approaching landscape maintenance and water management under these conditions are necessary. These new methods include providing more personalized care.



These new methods require a higher level of professional landscape maintenance, similar to that of a professional gardener, because the needs go beyond the basic tasks of turfgrass, plant, shrub, and tree maintenance. These needs require a balance between minimizing stress while maximizing quality, which requires a significant level of attention to detail.

And details are not strictly limited to plant health and aesthetics, they also include safety and drainage considerations, as shown in the photos.

## LANDSCAPE DO-OVER

Environmental Concepts prides itself in working with communities to achieve their long- and short-term goals for design and water conservation. Give us a call for a consultation and set your plans into motion.

Below is an example of an area that was redesigned to meet our customer's needs.



Before



After

**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
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