



Fall is here. There have been high spikes in the daytime temperatures, but the trend is downward. Most of Ohio has received a bit of rain relief, and it looks like we may see some fall color. The male goldfinches are in their winter feathers, the insect songs are a low murmur, and there is more small mammal activity as food is stored for the winter. It is also the mating season for deer; drive carefully!

BISON NEWS: We should be seeing bison at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park by the middle to end of November as the fence construction is nearing completion. A group from Metro Parks toured the Wilds to watch Bison wrangling. They also took a look at some of the cows and calves that we might have at Battelle Darby Creek.

BISON BOWL: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, is almost upon us. The Stewards, Metro Parks, SportsMonster, and WBNS-10TV/Commit to be Fit are the sponsors of our first annual fundraising event at Scioto Audubon Metro Park to benefit the re-introduction of bison to Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park. There is still time to sign up a team which you can do online. There are links to the registration page on the Metro Parks website (www.metroparks.net) and the Stewards' website (www.stewardsofmetroparks.org). Even if you aren't actively participating, you are welcome to be a supportive spectator. And, finally, if you want to help out with concessions, or talking with visitors at the Stewards' booth, let us know by contacting Debra Knapke (dknapke@columbus.rr.com). This event is for folks who are 18 and older. (MORE DETAILS ATTACHED)

GARDEN TIPS:

It's Finally Fall Planting Time... but you still have to water, especially your needle and broadleaf evergreens. Do not let them go into the winter on the dry side!

To Clean Up or Not to Clean Up the beds... The main reason to clean up dead plants in the garden is to prevent the overwintering of disease and insect pests in the insulating layers of dead leaves, stems and flowers. If you have an obvious disease or insect invasion, by all means move dead plants out of the garden. The reasons not to remove all the old leaves and such, is that you leave the crowns of perennials exposed to the dessicating cold of winter. You also may be removing next year's first generation of butterfly eggs and chrysalis along with the eggs of beneficial insects. It is difficult to burrow out of a packed compost pile.

Moving tender plants back into the house: Depending on your source and where you live, the average first frost date in Central Ohio falls between October 3 and October 15. Since we are already past that, be prepared to move in all tender plants, if you haven't already. You may have noticed that you also moved in some hitchhikers: pillbugs, spiders, millipedes and more. What are your options? You can repot your plants before you bring

them in with new potting soil and put the old media in your compost pile or let it sit overwinter for re-use in the spring for more outdoor plants (in a future *Sassafras Leaf*, there will be guidelines on how to re-use old potting soil). You can use an insecticidal soap as a soil drench, but care must be taken that you don't use too much soap or you may harm the roots of your plant. Or, you can just live with the occasional pest and transfer him or her outside as needed.

ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS:

Outside: Lovely autumn with the beautiful leaves, the fun leaf piles, and the smell of open fires. Or, we hope not! Open burning of leaves and brush/wood are highly inefficient although wonderful and nostalgic. This inefficiency translates into incomplete combustion which contributes highly to air pollution, greenhouse gases, and allergies. Just something to consider when planning that autumn party.

Speaking of the loveliness of leaves, they certainly lose some of that luster when they have to be raked and managed. One great recommendation from some older Extension resources is to use the leaves as insulation around plants and across garden beds. Putting down several inches of leaves is a natural way of insulating plants for the winter, not to mention a great way of managing a fairly good amount of leaf material! If you have a mulching mower, it can take a LOT of leaves to cover a bed. If, like me, you have a reel mower, just put them down whole. In the spring, turn them under with the soil to add tilth.

Inside: As autumn moves onward, it's time to start thinking about closing up houses and apartments for the winter. Given the high levels of pollen this summer and autumn, as you close up, it might be a really good idea to do a good cleaning to clear out the pollens and dust that accumulate through open windows. Minimize the use of chemical cleaners as you close up the house; sometimes a good dusting is enough. Other times, use a damp rag, water, and if necessary, a mild abrasive (you can use kitchen products!) will suffice. It's easier to clean before you seal windows and doorways so that you can still allow some fresh breezes to help remove any smells and help you dry things well.

Touch a Park! Stewards of Metro Parks supports and furthers the work of our Metro Parks
1069 West Main Street | Westerville OH 43081 | Tel: 614.891.0700 | Fax: 614.895.6208
www.stewardsofmetroparks.org