



The Scoop on Fall Planting

It's a tradition that Spring is planting time. But is it really the best time to plant? Fall has many advantages over Spring for planting trees, shrubs and perennials.

Fall begins on the autumnal equinox in late September although we tend to define Fall by the change to cooler weather and shorter days.

Although the air is cooler, soil temperatures remain warm enough for plant roots to grow (roots will grow in soil temperatures as low as 45 degrees F.). This means roots can grow well into our mild winter. With the arrival of warm Spring temperatures, the Fall-planted plant has an established root system and is ready for top-growth. In Spring, soil temperatures are cooler while air temperatures are warmer. This results in slower root growth while the above-ground part of the plant begins to grow. The slower root growth means that a Spring-planted plant will lag behind a Fall-planted one.

In Arizona, Spring is quickly followed by hot temperatures and dry air in May and June. This period can be tough on a plant that has not had time to establish a deep root system—which means more water will be required to see the plant through to monsoon season. The more established root system of a Fall-planted plant means it is better prepared for this hot, dry period—which results in reduced watering needs.

In Fall there are generally fewer pest and disease problems. Giving your plants a chance to establish means they are better prepared to defend themselves against warm weather pests and diseases.

If you plant in Fall, don't forget to water. Even though the plant may be dormant, its roots are still growing. Plants should also be given a deep soaking once to twice a month in winter when daytime temperatures are above 40 degrees.



So give Fall planting a try! Take advantage of cooler temperatures and warm soil before winter arrives!