

Q. Now that fall is here, what can I do to revitalize my landscape and garden?

A. First, cleanup planting beds where flowers and vegetables are no longer productive. Cut back or remove dead foliage. The cuttings can be chopped and composted. If you have fruit trees, pick up and dispose of all fruit which has fallen on the ground (don't put in your compost). Leaving fallen fruit on the ground can promote many types of pests.

Mulch following your cleanup to help rejuvenate the soil and aid in moisture retention. Because we are experiencing a drought and extended Santa Ana winds (now lasting through February in recent years), mulch will aid plant health and water conservation. Organic mulch is recommended. Mix mulch into the top few inches of soil in vegetable beds. Mulch in landscape areas and under trees, 3-4" thick. It is important to keep mulch 6-8 inches AWAY from tree trunks and the base of shrubbery as direct contact with mulch in these areas can introduce weaknesses and pests.

As the Santa Ana fire season intensifies, there are things you can do to make your yard and landscape less fire prone. The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources has a year-round and seasonal guide for residents. The program is called, SAFER – Sustainable And FirE Resistant Landscapes.

You can access the guide at:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/SAFELandscapes/Fire_preparation_throughout_the_year/Fall/

