

## Haddam Garden Club

November 2018 Garden Blog Article

by Cindy Tillson



### Garlic Has a Mind of its Own!

Time to plant garlic again! My crop this summer was plentiful, but the bulb size was a bit disappointing. I could blame it on the weather.... Or maybe I planted it too early (see below).

An article I read recently in Mother Earth News said that when you plant garlic determines the number of cloves in your new bulb. If you plant in early November (warmer soil) the garlic plant perceives more nutrients available and makes more cloves. Conversely, planted later and nearer to the ground freezing, the plant thinks it better get going and makes fewer but larger cloves. The heads will be about the same size so it's a personal choice between more smaller cloves or fewer larger ones—or perhaps you want some of each! The article also suggested adding Azomite at the rate of ½ pound per 10-foot row to increase the size and yield. I'm game! (How to Grow Great Garlic: Expert Tips for a Blue-Ribbon Crop; Bailey, Roberta; Mother Earth News August/Sept 2015) It's also time to finish cleaning up those flower and vegetable gardens. Cut back the perennials. When doing this, you might want to keep some seed stalks and anything else that could potentially be interesting in a dried arrangement.

Pull or leave annuals. Some will make it through the winter. Pull the dead vegetable plants and don't compost if the plant has had fungus or disease. Bag it and take it to the dump in that case. Cut the asparagus plants back to a few inches.

Remember to leave the leaves. Mulch them up and put them on your gardens, spread them on your lawn or put them in a wire cage or pile to compost. Please don't throw them in the landfill or the woods.

You can extend your growing season for veggies that like cool weather by putting a cold frame or other sheltered arrangement over and around them. Broccoli, kale, chard, parsley, arugula, spinach and other greens lend themselves nicely to this. What's the worst that can happen?

Don't cut back your woody perennials like Bethlehem Sage and Butterfly bushes until spring unless the branches are so long they might break under the weight of snow. If they are that long, trim them up. Leave the grasses until spring, as well as the seed stalks and heads of Echinacea and cosmos. It will provide winter interest for you and the birds love them. Keep weeding too—come spring, you'll be glad you did.

It makes me feel good to look out at a garden that's tidied up for whatever winter brings.

There aren't any programs for the public at the November or December meetings.