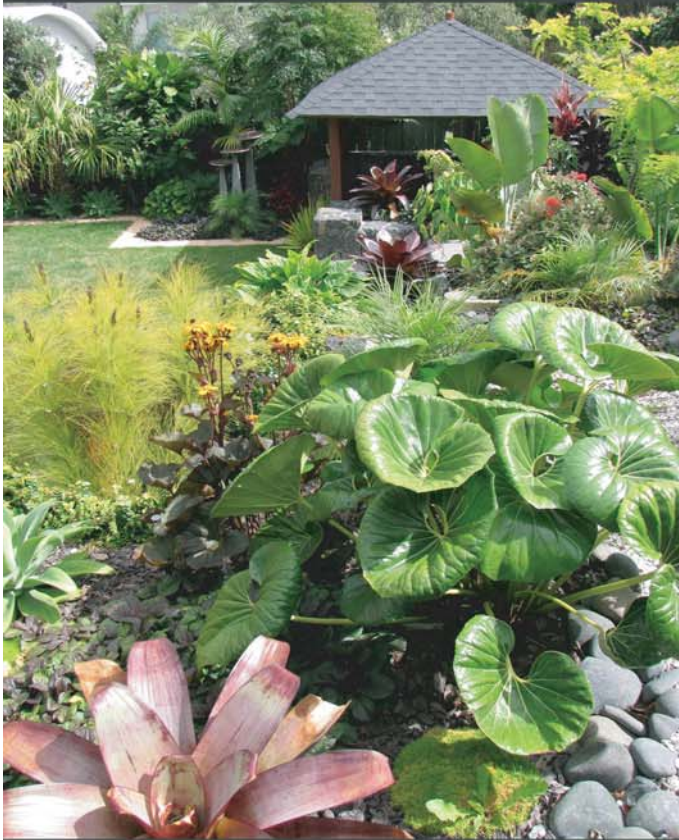


# It's Planting Time!

Don't miss out on the autumn planting season

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## Gardening with Shannon

**How's your lawn looking? Has it greened up after the dry spell we had in early April?**

Now is a good time to sow a new lawn, lay turf or apply hydro lawn. Autumn lawns have the chance of establishing themselves before the summer and don't require a large amount of watering. Thin patches in the lawn can be re-sown with a small amount of fine topsoil. If you have a problem with moss, rake in approximately one bucket of river stone per square metre of lawn. You may find your lawn will benefit a lot by a good feed. I find a fertiliser called 'turf gold' works really well and will make your lawn look lush and dark green. And yes, we all need to be careful with regular lawn mowing to prevent seed heads from spreading.

Protect your garden from the cold autumn and winter winds which can cause damage to new growth. Install a screen of wind cloth for instant protection or plant a hedge line of wind hardy natives such as pittosporums, griselinas, or corokias. Stake them to give them a good start and let them establish strong root growth. Your new shelter will also respond well if the plants are mulched around the base, fertilised, and kept weed free. This is a mistake that is often made I'm sure - people would take a lot more care if they realised the huge difference this makes to plant growth and plant health.

For spring colour now is the time to plant bulbs and drifts under trees or clusters beside driveways. Tulips and hyacinths, which are susceptible to rot, should be planted in late July to early August. For winter colour prepare beds for cinerarias, primulas, pansies, polyanthus, sweet peas and the ornamental kale, if you can find a warm sheltered spot. Other plants to consider for colour in the cooler months are hellebores, heathers, arum lilies, cyclamen, camellia and Daphne.

Also, don't forget some of our wonderful natives and foliage colours, such as tussock grasses, flax cultivars, astelia, cabbage tree cultivars, such as Red Fountain. Take note of striking autumn cultivars so you can plant and be ready for next year. For shades of red, plant Liquid Amber or Claret Ash. If you prefer yellows, ginkgo or the Indian Bead Tree are a lovely option. Flowering cherries also have a spectacular display of autumn colour with the added bonus of spring blossoms. For smaller sites where there is limited space there may be a wall where the Virginia creeper can be grown and its striking autumn colours enjoyed.

