

# SEVEN BENDS AND FRIENDS



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SEVEN BENDS NURSERY



## Enjoying monthly Updates?

Follow our social media accounts to stay updated throughout the week!



[WEBSITE](#)

[WEBSTORE](#)

*SOCIAL MEDIA*



## *Letter from Lara*

Dear Lovers of Native Flora,

Well, I'm not sure about you, but I'm ready for some cool weather and a chance to explore the beauty of nature's autumn palette. Dropping temperatures are inducing dormancy in our native plants, a seasonal process that slows plant growth and protects delicate tissues from icy weather. The vibrant colors that we associate with fall signal the start of dormancy for many species, most recognizably, trees like oak, maple, and tupelo. Grasses transition from hues of green to tan, their vertical structures possessing an understated beauty that captures the essence of the season. The seed heads of flowering plants that feed wildlife during the harshest time of the year do so with a sculptural quality that compels me to pause in appreciation.

As an ecologist, I have learned to see beauty in landscapes that provide life. This is a shift in perspective that Seven Bends Nursery aims to instill in the broader community. The gardening practices that Seven Bends advocates for differ from traditional approaches in that our aim is to create beautiful spaces that also provide habitat and food for native wildlife. Oftentimes, these wildlife-friendly practices have the dual benefit of reducing maintenance costs and saving us time...

I'm sure many of you, like myself, get a little antsy during the months of cold weather we're about to experience. But, the truth is, there is an opportunity to be seized in this time. The cool soils of Fall and Winter provide ideal conditions for root growth, meaning planting now offers plants the chance to establish well before enduring the stresses of heat and drought. The cooler months are also a great time to step back, evaluate your garden, and develop plans for the next year.

The nursery will be closing down for the Fall season soon, but I will be taking my own advice by admiring the singular charm of Fall in rural Virginia and strategizing on how to better serve you, our valued customers, in the coming year.

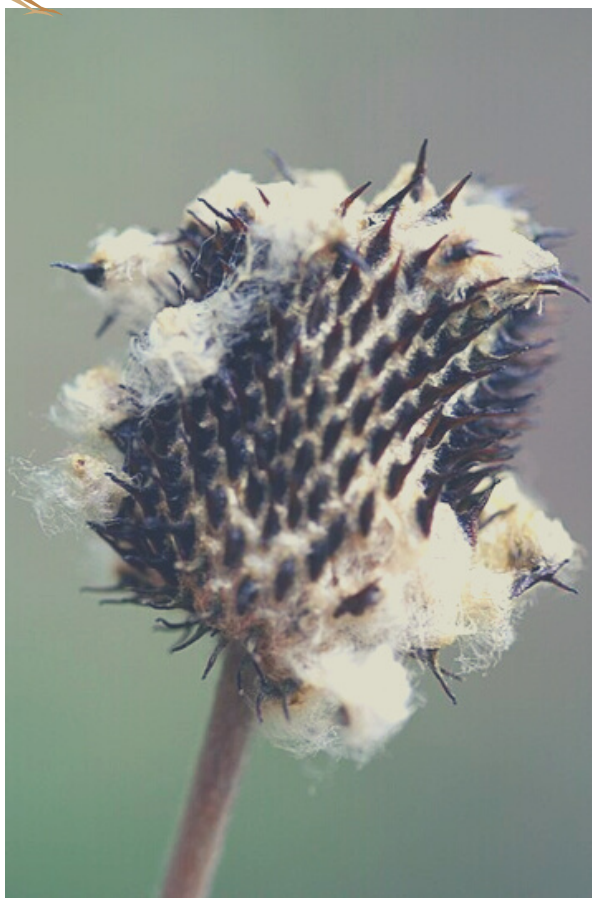
Warmly,  
Dr. Iara Lacher



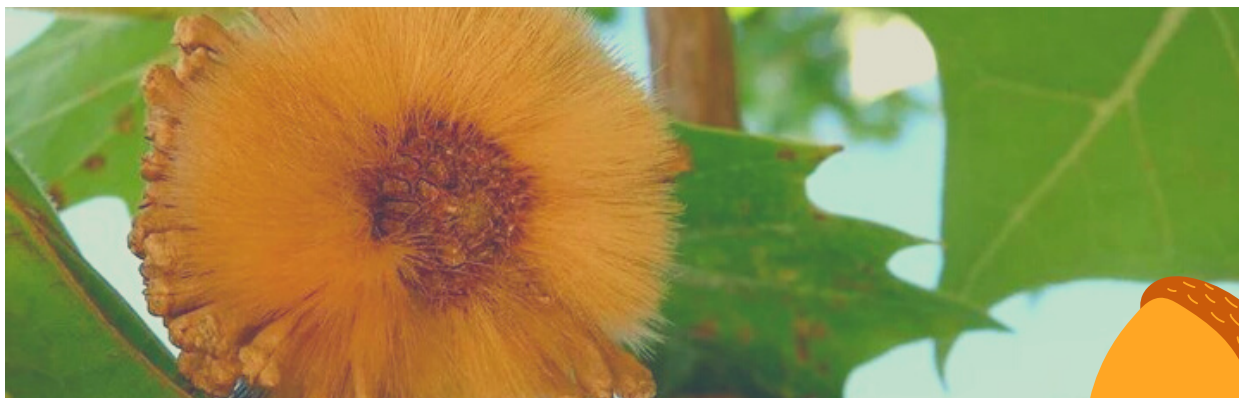
## *Important Dates*



*Important closing dates are listed below on the last page of this newsletter.*







## *Seven Bends Nursery Guide to...*

### FALL GARDENING WITH NATIVES

It feels like just last week we were welcoming in the spring with our Seven Bends Nursery Guide on Spring Gardening with native plants! Now, the fall is here with its assortment of warm colors and cooler days. The shorter days of fall mark a time when we are busily preparing our gardens for the winter to come. With winter staring us down it may be weird to think about getting out your trusty shovel and purchasing plants. However, the fall is actually one of the best times to plant as the cooler temperatures create the best soil conditions for root establishment. Not to mention cool weather also makes garden work a pleasure! Fall is also a great time to assess your garden as well as create a plan for next year's garden to get a head start on spring tasks.

It is important to keep in mind that gardening with native plants is different than gardening with ornamentals in traditional gardens. Our native plants do hard work feeding and housing native wildlife. Most of us who plant native want to ensure our native gardens continue to provide our native wildlife with these necessary resources even through the tough winter months. So how is fall gardening with natives different? Read below for steps on tending to your fall native garden that Seven Bends Nursery owner Dr. Iara Lacher has put together!

#### Tip One: Plant, Plant, Plant

Spring may be a great time to plant but so is the fall! Fall is THE BEST time to plant native woody plants such as trees, bushes, and vines. Planting in the fall allows them to get a head start establishing themselves and growing before spring. The variability of weather patterns from year to year makes it difficult to recommend a specific date to aim for, so we say that as long as you can stick a shovel in the ground (i.e. the ground is not frozen) you should be good to plant! You do want to aim for enough cool, but not frozen days to give plants a chance to establish themselves well before the first hard frost of the season. So keep an eye on the weather!





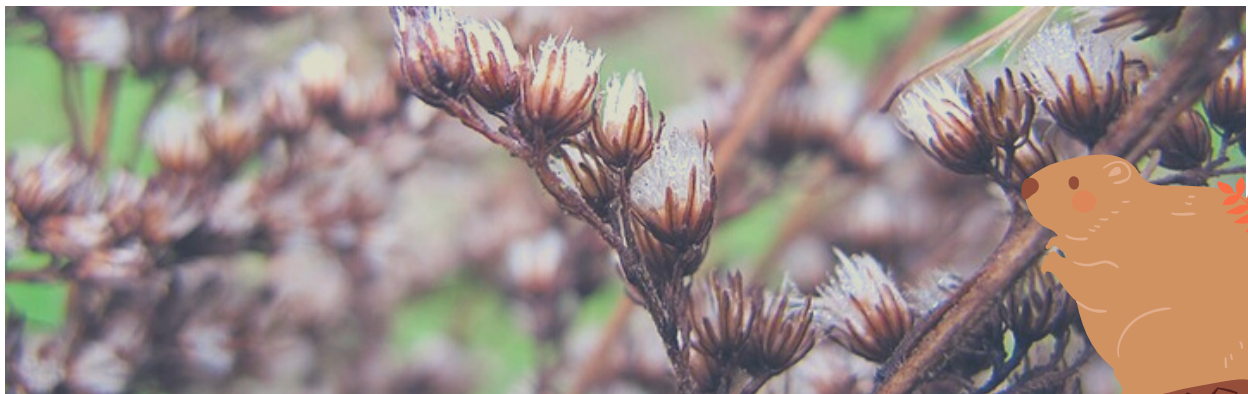
### Tip Two: Leave the Leaves

One of the first tasks gardeners take on during the fall is raking up all the leaves that have fallen in and around garden beds. However, we recommend leaving the leaves because they act as free mulch and fertilizer! In the appropriate place, when leaves are left to break down, they help control weeds and fertilize the soil making the best conditions for your plants to grow come spring. If you have leaves on impervious surfaces such as walkways and driveways, instead of moving them to the curb where they are taken to the dump, there are a few ways you can utilize this natural mulch! Leaves can be moved off solid surfaces and put into garden beds, around trees and shrubs, into compost, or used to create brush piles that house native wildlife during the winter. Another reason to leave the leaves in your garden is that wildlife uses them as shelter during the cooler months. Insects such as bumblebee queens overwinter in leaf litter and caterpillars and butterfly/moth pupae are found hidden in fallen leaves where they emerge once temperatures warm up in spring. Snakes, salamanders, and frogs also use leaves for coverage in the winter whether they are awake or hibernating such as our native wood frogs who freeze solid to survive the winter!

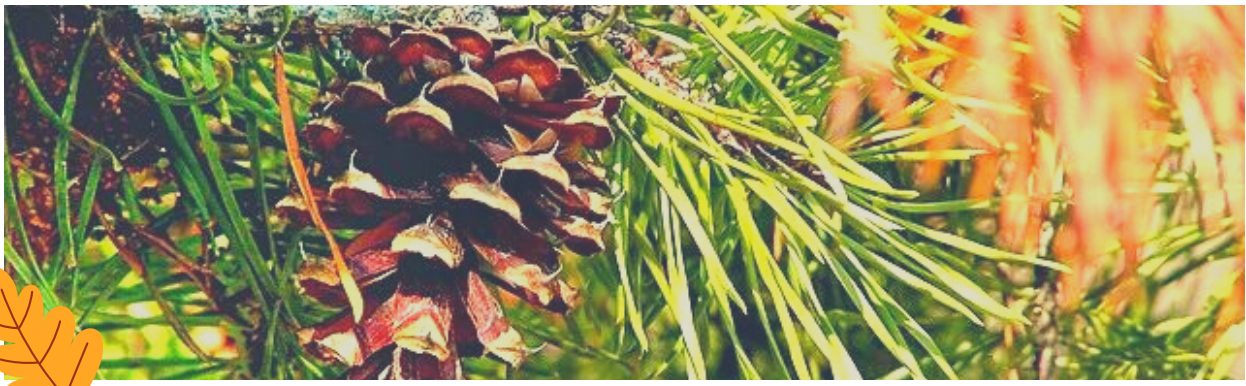
It is reported that 33 million tons of leaves a year are brought to our country's landfills every year where the oxygen-poor environment causes decomposing leaves to release methane gas into the atmosphere. No, thank you! We'd rather put those leaves to good use!

### Tip Three: Let the Stems Stand

Although it may be tempting to cut down all the spent plant material from your perennials at the end of summer, we recommend you leave those stems high and proud until temperatures warm up the following year. Many of our solitary bees, which are some of our most prolific pollinators, use them as shelter to overwinter. Leaving the seed heads that top this year's dry perennial shoots also provides food for our native wildlife when resources are scarce. Such plants to consider are Asters, Beebalm, Goldenrod, Joe-Pye, Mountain Mint, Blue Mist Flower, Penstemon, and Mallow. These can all be part of what's called a "Winter Seed-head garden" that native birds in the area will be attracted to.







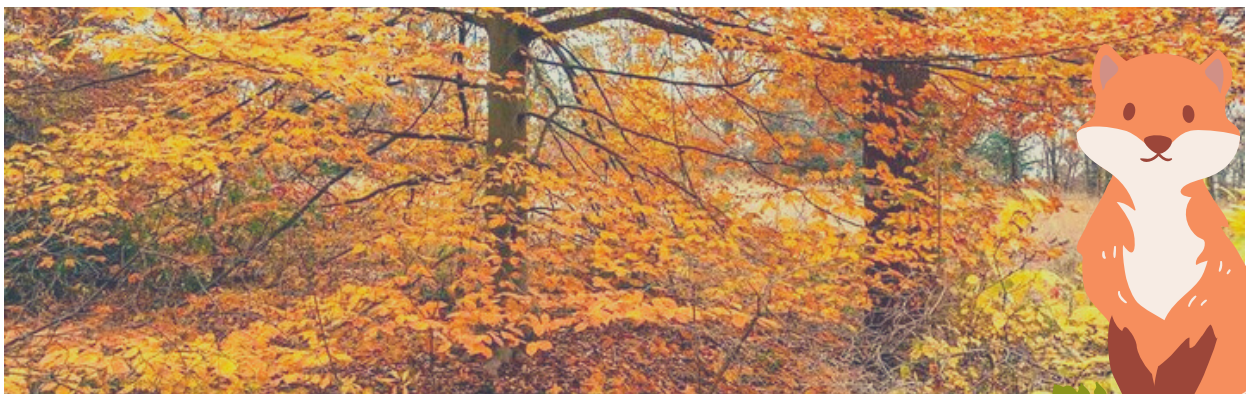
If you must cut back stems, consider just giving a trim, leaving some of the stem intact - at least 6 to 18 inches if possible. Once spring warms the soil and we experience some consistent 60-degree or warmer days, nesting bees will start to emerge, freeing you to tidy up before new growth gets too tall. You can use the cut stems to mulch around the plants within the bed, contributing to soil health and suppressing weeds. There are other practical benefits to leaving stems intact; plant matter left above the soil aids in insulating the dormant plant and lets you remember where they are!

#### Tip Four: Plan away!

The slow months of late fall and winter can be hard for a gardener, but there is one benefit - they provide the opportunity for you to plan your garden for the coming year! Fall and winter is a great time to assess and think about how to improve it next spring. Are there gaps in your garden that could be filled in? Were some plants more successful than others? Are you looking around now wishing for more fall season interest? Do you want to add a new garden bed? Maybe you want to increase pollinator or bird visits to your property. Whatever it is, now is a good time to take notes on your garden, plan for what you want your garden to accomplish, and figure out how to reach those goals. If you feel overwhelmed or don't know where to start, Dr. Lara Lacher can help you make these plans through a consultation and landscape design. To learn more about how we can help you get your native garden started, or add to it, please check out our consultation and landscape design services by clicking [here](#).

While you are gardening in the fall remember to enjoy every moment of the season before our native plants go to sleep for the winter. Don't be too sad though! We will see them back again in a few months stronger and healthier than they have ever been. If there is one thing we can learn from fall gardening it is that we all need a little rest to be able to flourish in our next season of life.

- Happy fall gardening from your Seven Bends Nursery Team



# Closing Dates

<p>Mondays at the Farm Appointments Close</p>	<p>October 31, 2023</p>	<p>Seven Bends Nursery Farm will close appointments for farm visits at the end of October. If you want to visit us this year, be sure to make your appointment for: 10/23 or 10/30 by clicking <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p>Square Store Closes</p>	<p>November 16, 2023</p>	<p>Last day to place an online order for curbside pick up. Order must be placed before 5pm. The last pick-up date is on Sunday, November 19th (9am-12pm). We will reopen the <a href="#">web store</a> on April 1st, 2024.</p>
<p>Landscape Design Clients</p>	<p>Special access to plant material year round.</p>	<p>Those who have received a landscape design from Iara are able to order plants during our off-season. Arrangements are specific to each client.</p>

