BEFORE THE FIRST FROST

Fall Garden Checklist

What to do now, and what can wait.

SWEET BOMBDIGGITY FARMS

Start with your frost date. Everything here runs on your average first fall frost. Mine, in East Tennessee (zone 7B), is late October. Look yours up by zip at planthardiness.ars.usda.gov or with your local extension office.

Before the first frost

- [ ] Harvest what the frost will take: peppers, tomatoes, basil, squash
- [ ] Keep what you'd normally toss: basil flowers for vinegar, zinnia and marigold seed
- [ ] Plant garlic, a few weeks after first frost, before the ground freezes
- [ ] Sow a cover crop: crimson clover or winter rye

Around the first frost

- [ ] Get spring bulbs in the ground: tulips, daffodils, alliums
- [ ] Set a few bulbs aside to force indoors for the holidays

After the first frost

- [ ] Dig the dahlias once the tops go black, dry and store cool
- [ ] Clean up, but not everything: pull diseased plants, leave seed heads and hollow stems
- [ ] Feed the compost pile: spent plants, leaves, coop bedding

Once the ground is cold

- [ ] Mulch perennials
- [ ] Drain the hoses and bring them in
- [ ] Write down what worked and what didn't