

# To-Do

20 steps to prepare your garden for the new season.
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# TIPS

Local businesses give their top tips for getting ready for fall. Page 8.







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Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

# Lofty Goals

# Charlotte Hubbard embraces the past in a historic loft apartment

**BY LISA DAVIS** 

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Charlotte Hubbard is living like it's the 19th century - but with air-conditioning. The Oxford city councilwoman just moved into a newly refurbished loft apartment above her business, Hubbard's Off Main restaurant in old downtown Oxford.

'Refurbished" here means "kept it authentic and modernized as little as possible."

"I always wanted to live in an old house. It's great if you like old and cracked and things not being square which I do," Hubbard said.

The building was built in 1898. The downstairs used to be Robertson's Cash Store; the upstairs was at some

point a doctor's office. "While cleaning the walls, we found two old glass syringes," Hubbard said.

She kept the plaster walls as is, including peeling layers of colors. In several places — including one whole wall — the plaster is gone entirely, exposing the narrow wood laths underneath. "I left the lath showing to show how much work went into this place," Hubbard

Most of the wooden floors and doors are original, as are the large transom windows (which had been covered in layers and layers of paint).

Hubbard opted not to install central heat and air, instead installing wall- and ceiling-mounted Mitsubishi Electric cooling units in three of the five rooms.

There are also several coal-burning fireplaces that she

plans to convert to gas logs.

There are no built-in cabinets, no closets. Instead, Hubbard uses lots of storage pieces and a clothing

She has filled the rooms with a comfortable mix of family heirlooms, antiques and modern reproductions. "It's very livable," she said. "These are all rooms that

Hubbard and her family used to live in a huge house, but after her husband passed away in 2012, she moved to a different loft apartment in downtown Oxford, before downsizing once again to this new apartment.

Continued on Page 4



after all.) Instead, she has a refrigerator, a microwave, a toaster and a coffee pot.

There is no stove in Charlotte Hubbard's kitchen. (She does live above a restaurant,



A new balcony overlooks Choccolocco Street in downtown Oxford. "It's cool

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in the morning," Charlotte Hubbard said.







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#### Continued from Page 3

"If you have a business, it's so nice to live upstairs," Hubbard said. "I am downstairs all the time. I can come up here and take breaks. I don't have to leave late at night to go home. It's what shop owners used to do, and I understand why."

The front room of the apartment opens onto a new balcony overlooking downtown, where a \$3 million renovation project is underway to make the area more historically charming with brick sidewalks, old-style street lamps and landscaping.

Within walking distance of Hubbard's restaurant and apartment lie three churches, the Oxford Performing Arts Center, a coffee shop, an ice cream store, a variety of retail shops and — a crucial element to successful downtown loft living — a grocery store.

Hubbard is far from the only loft owner in downtown.

She sold her old apartment to a young family with two children. Other business owners are also considering renovating and moving in above their shops. A law firm has renovated two upstairs apartments in its building as vacation rentals.

"It used to be only older folks down here, but now it's

more young people," Hubbard said. "Now I may be the oldest."

Lisa Davis is Features Editor of The Anniston Star.

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Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The wooden floors and ceiling beams in the front room are original to the 1898 building. One wall is covered in colorful layers of peeling plaster, while on another wall the plaster has been removed, exposing the wood laths underneath.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The master bedroom used to be a storage area for Hubbard Pianos, which was owned by Charlotte Hubbard's brother-in-law. There used to be 100 piano benches

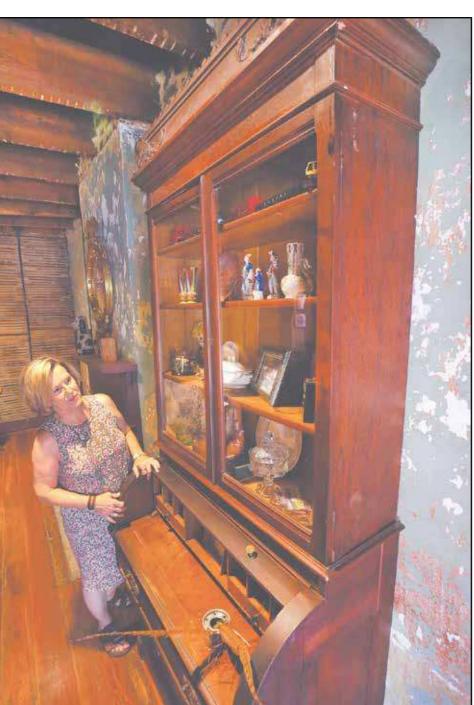


"I always wanted to live in an old house. It's great if you like old and cracked and things not being square which I do."

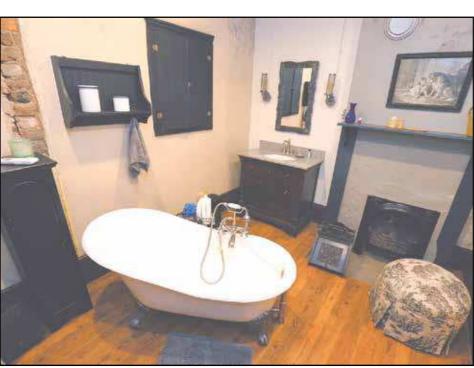
— Charlotte Hubbard



In the sitting room is a painting of the old Oxford Middle School, a gift to Charlotte Hubbard when she retired as a teacher in 1977. Paintings by local artists Jerry Marks and Larry Martin hang on walls throughout the apartment.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star The roll top desk is one of many family antiques in the apartment. The shelves are filled with heirlooms, including monogrammed dishes that belonged to Charlotte Hubbard's grandmother, and a toy train that belonged to her late husband and his brothers. "It's funny the things that mean a lot to you," she said.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

The tub was too wide to fit through the apartment's narrow hallway, so it had to be lifted up with a crane to the second floor.

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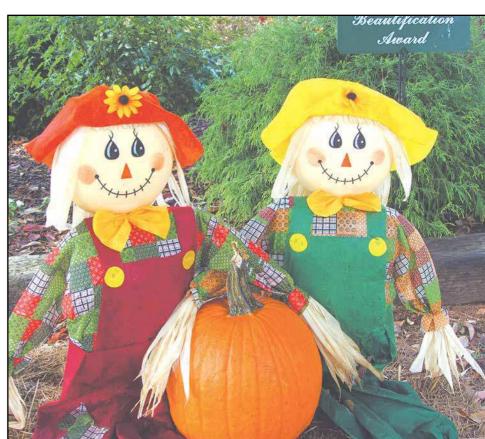




THE SOUTHERN GARDENER

# fall garden chores

20 tasks to prepare your yard for the new season



Photos by Sherry Blanton/Special to The Star

#### **BY SHERRY BLANTON**

Special to The Star

Shorter days, longer nights, chillier mornings, frost, brilliant red and orange leaves, shedding trees, pumpkins, fall festivals, scarecrows, mums ... Fall begins with warm, dry days and ends with rain and cold. Sometimes, as happened in 2017, it brings unexpected snow and

Fall officially started on Sept. 22, with winter coming on Dec. 21. Gardeners can work in the cooler temperatures to get the landscape ready for winter and even the next growing season. It is a time of clean up, preparation, planting and pleasure as summer's heat fades.

#### 1. Do a soil test.

bone-chilling cold.

Fall is an excellent time to perform a soil test. With the knowledge of your particular soil's needs, you can apply whatever is appropriate (or skip what is not necessary) and give those chemicals time to work their magic before spring arrives.

#### 2. Water away.

If autumn's first few weeks remain as warm as summer's last weeks, continue to attend to the summer needs of the garden. Keep lawns, newly planted shrubs,

# "When all the chores are done, the avid gardener will invent some new ones."

— Unknown

#### 3. Pull up summer annuals.

continue.

and containers watered. Many gardeners

are weary of watering, but that job has to

Most summer annuals tend to be bedraggled or gone by the time fall arrives. Pull them up, and purchase heat-tolerant fall perennials or even some fresh summer annuals. When all else seems too much bother, mulch the empty

## 4. Check the soil moisture.

By the time the Halloween scarecrows appear on the shelves, ornamentals may need less water. Check the soil moisture before continuing a summer watering schedule.

#### 5. Hold the pansies.

Do not be tempted to plant pansies, a cool season annual, or florist mums in the first weeks of fall. They do not like warm days. Pansies will stretch and mums will melt, requiring massive doses of water to keep them perky.

# 6. Take cuttings from perennials.

Before the first frost (usually about Nov. 1), it is critical to take cuttings from perennials (or anything else) you want to propagate over the winter.

#### 7. Bring houseplants in.

House plants should come in before nighttime temperatures drop into the 50s; they need a good bath to prevent bringing insects or diseases into the house.

#### 8. Dig up caladium bulbs.

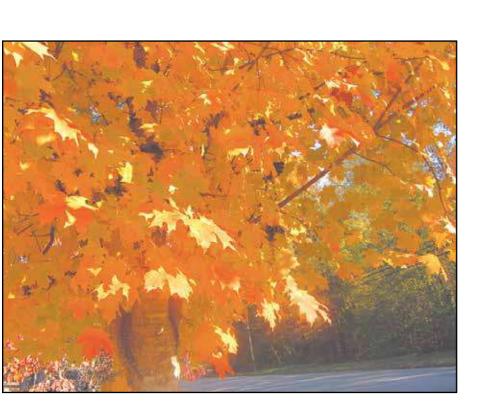
Dig up caladiums bulbs as nights get into the 50s (way before the first frost). Dry them and store in a warm place (at least 65 degrees) to ride out winter before replanting next spring.

#### 9. Start a compost bin.

Put together a simple or fancy compost bin. Pick up leaves that others drag to the street to add to it. Keep lawns raked, and save those precious by-products for mulch or compost. A layer of mulch acts as a blanket in winter to keep soil warmer, conserve moisture and enrich the garden

#### 10. Pick up some pine straw.

Pine straw, another common cast off, also makes an excellent mulch, a garden's best friend. I always have buckets in my truck to stop and pick it up. I have even been seen raking up the street to bring home that precious "freebie." When my sister and I were children, we were easily embarrassed as my mother picked up pine straw on the side of the road. Now my sister and I are both guilty of that same "activity"; there is nothing more satisfying than a truck full of free pine straw.





# 11. Remove dead foliage.

Remove dead or dying foliage from the flower beds and the vegetable garden. That old debris may harbor diseases or insect pests; it has to go!

planting time in our area, and garden centers will be

best time to plant is early- to mid-winter.) If planted

in the fall, plants can use their energy to develop good

and flowers and the stress of hot and dry days. We can

continue planting as long as the ground is not frozen. If

nature does not provide sufficient moisture for the new

plants, it is up to the gardener to provide water as needed.

strong roots without the headaches of producing leaves

stocked with ornamental shrubs and trees. (The second

# 12. Empty your lawn mower.

It is a good idea to run any leftover gas out of the lawnmower in preparation for winter. Something seems to happen to that old gas over the winter, which in our case invariably leads to a service call in the spring.

#### 13. Clean your tools.

Give tools a good cleaning and sharpening as necessary. We are surely not putting them away, but these hard workers will appreciate the attention.

# 14. Save pansies and mums till October. October can be a satisfying month in the garden.

Cooler days and longer nights are the signal for installing color beds and containers of cheery pansies, the perfect antidote for the January blahs. Keep them watered until the rains start. Mums will be sold everywhere; they do a fine job of lighting up the fall garden. Mums require regular water (in containers they may need it every single day).

**15. Plant spring perennials.**Fall, especially early October, is also a great time to plant spring-blooming perennials. To celebrate, garden shops may offer sales on spring perennials.

The end of October marks the beginning of the best

16. Wait till October to plant.

# 17. Go colorful.

Choose new plants to provide year-round color. Fall-blooming sasanqua japonicas are a wonderful sight mixed with the changing colors on your trees. In the deepest part of winter, camellia japonicas can put on a gorgeous display of blossoms that can last until spring.

## 18. Don't prune.

Fall is NOT the time to prune. Pruning promotes new growth, which can get zapped by those inevitable fall frosts. Save pruning for late in the winter, when trees and shrubs are dormant.

# 19. Take care of the birds.

As fall days get colder, keep bird feeders full and provide a source of non-frozen water for our feathered companions to have a drink and a bath.

# **20. Plant spring bulbs after the first frost.**By December (and after the first hard frost), it is time

to plant spring-blooming bulbs, such as daffodils and tulips. (Tulips and daffodils should have been purchased much earlier while garden centers and catalogs have a good selection.)

As dark comes earlier and we head into the winter season, we can sit back and enjoy the sight of a neat garden, and look forward to the joys of spring.

# getting ready

Local businesses give tips for preparing your home for fall

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— Heath Burr, owner





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- Scott Skinner, STS Decorating

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- Bill Newman, president



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Cliff Burton, general manager





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- Jessica McCauley, director of communications

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— Montez Bryant, owner

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— Larry Currie, agent

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— Wayne Mizzell, owner

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