Sales patterns in the U.S. are closely tied to holidays, sporting events and the change of season. With that in mind, remember that fall is here, along with some great opportunities to save a few dollars. These are the items you can look for to be at special prices during the next few months.

First, look for items that are traditionally on sale during back-to-school sales and pick up those things that didn’t sell in the rush. Think about jeans and other clothing that might not have sold out. Those new fashions might just be a little more mainstream at this time and bargains can be had.

Leftover school supplies are another good buy. I always buy the cheapest specially priced items left over from the school supplies rush and use them as stocking stuffers at Christmas. Sometimes a new set of markers is just the spark of creativity needed to keep little ones busy during the holiday season.

Retailers are clearing out their outdoor equipment now to free up shelf space for winter merchandise. Look for camping equipment, fishing gear and hiking gear for next summer. Tents, folding chairs and picnic coolers are great under the Christmas tree and can be had at a bargain price.

Toys can be a great price this month as retailers are clearing out room for the newest trend for the holidays. Look for classic games and toys for the best prices.

Columbus Day sales in early October are the best time to find good prices on furniture and mattresses as we prepare to spruce up our homes for the holidays.

Halloween is the end of the month. No bargains are to be had in this area right now, but the closer it gets to the holiday, the better the prices become on
Halloween costumes, candy, and decorations. Nov. 1 is the best day to shop for Halloween items. I often hit the sales rack for leftover candy and decorations. Good chocolate can be cut up into chunks and used as chocolate chips at a bargain price. And my family doesn’t care if they are eating a pumpkin-shaped peanut butter cup, just as long as they can eat it. Remember that most candies can be frozen for longer storage.

Fall is also a great time to take advantage of wine sales. The new wines are coming on the market, so the old vintages must be sold.

November is a shopping month. We are gearing up for the holidays, but don’t overlook Veterans Day sales. Toys, kids clothing and winter gear are traditionally on sale during this time. Look for electronics as the big stores start pushing for holiday sales. Many stores offer a 10 percent discount to anyone with a military ID on Veterans Day.

If you are looking for a new or used car, be sure to check your favorite auto dealers. They are pushing last year’s models to be able to focus on selling the new ones.

It is down time for weddings, so look for good prices on wedding dresses, favors and accessories. If you are planning for a wedding later, take advantage of these lower prices.

Cookware and kitchen items are also on sale. Since we use so many specialty items during the holidays, it’s a great time to stock up or to buy that special Christmas gift.

All these wonderful sales and we haven’t even talked about Black Friday, Cyber Monday or other holiday-related sales. Consider purchasing early and skipping the stampede of customers at these traditional sales days. Roxie Rodgers Dinstel is associate director of Cooperative Extension Service, a part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Questions or column requests can be e-mailed to her at rrdinstel@alaska.edu or by calling 907-474-7201.