

Wrapping Up Your Garden

Gardening Season Isn't Over

Must Do's

Some chores must be done now because the plants need it or to prevent future garden problems

1. Move Houseplants Indoors
Check for Insects and Disease
Repot if overgrown, but do not fertilize now
2. Dig tubers (dahlias), bulbs (caladium), rhizomes (cannas) and corms (gladiolus)
Dry and remove soil, trim shoots to 2 to 3"
Store in a cool dry place (basement) in a paper or mesh bag
3. Remove ALL diseased and bug infested plant material
Bag and discard, do not compost!
4. Keep harvesting your garden. When the harvest is completed, clean the garden of all plant debris that may be infected with disease or insects.
5. Leave faded flowers on roses and butterfly bushes
Trim long canes only after leaves drop. Clean up all fallen leaves before winter

Should Do's

Some garden chores can be put off but your garden will be healthier and Spring chores easier if done now.

1. Keep Weeding "One year's weeds, seven years seeds"
2. Save herbs, freeze or dry
3. Fertilize Lawns in October (if you didn't fertilize this year!)
Get a soil test. Add lime only if needed
4. Don't forget to lower the mower blade to 1 1/2 inches for the last mowing.
Tall grass is more prone to suffering from snow mold
5. Add compost, composted manure or shredded leaves to perennial beds and vegetable gardens. A layer of compost now means the beds are improved and ready to plant in the spring without extra digging.
6. Plant spring blooming bulbs after the first hard frost.
No marching soldiers, place in groups or sweeps!
Bulbs need to start growing roots now. Add a small amount of lime and chicken grit or gravel in the bottom of the hole.
7. Empty and clean containers. Finish with a weak bleach rinse before storing.

8. Add a 2-4 inch layer of mulch over perennials and around trees and shrubs to protect the roots from freeze/thaw cycles in the winter. Mower chopped leaves will benefit the plants by staying where they fell.

Could Do's

Take advantage of the cooler, wetter weather for garden chores. You have more time in the fall than in the spring when everything becomes a must do.

1. Plant new trees and shrubs. Many nurseries have great sales at this time of year.
How to plant a tree?
Dig a saucer, not a teacup.
Plant at the level of the crown, backfill with improved soil, but do not fertilize.
Water daily for a week, weekly until the ground freezes
2. Plant seeds for late fall and winter harvest. Create a cold frame to extend harvest into winter.
3. Divide overgrown summer bloomers like irises and peonies, phlox and rudbeckia
4. Renovate your lawn or overseed thin lawns now
No competition from weeds
Cooler wetter weather improves success
Add a ¼ inch layer of compost on your lawn
5. Create a new garden bed. Lay out a bed this fall with 6 to 8 sheets of newspaper covered with 6 inches of soil or mulch, it'll be ready to plant in the spring.
6. Pot up paperwhites, crocuses and other bulbs to force for yourself or friends
7. Clean and sharpen tools on rainy days so they are ready for winter emergencies —and spring!

Don't

1. Don't rake your lawn, mow it. By chopping up leaves with a mulching mower, you will return the nutrients to the soil
2. Don't prune spring blooming trees and shrubs
Pruning now will remove flower buds
3. Don't be alarmed by evergreen needle drop—old needles drop, just not all at once as leaves do
4. Don't wrap shrubs. Wrappings can damage shrubs by limiting light and air circulation, breaking branches and providing hiding places for insects and rodents.
Use plastic mesh fencing or rope to secure branches. Protect evergreens from wind damage with burlap barriers, use repellents to keep deer from browsing on your plants.