

'Nurturing your garden' with Jim Kogelheide

Fall lawn and garden care are necessary to enjoy your plants throughout spring and summer, so ensure your lawn stays healthy in fall and winter. When it comes to lawn care, most people focus all their efforts during the spring and summer. Some steps should be taken during the winter and fall seasons to ensure you get the same results next growing season.



Lawn Care:

Removing weeds to minimize competition for available nutrients and water is key to start preparing your garden for the colder seasons. Mow your lawn as late into the fall as the grass grows. Grass left too long when deep snow arrives can develop brown patches in the spring. Also, as the weather begins to cool, your lawn will slow its top growth, while the roots will continue to grow. Fertilizer should be applied in the fall in time when the plants are still absorbing nutrients. Finally, if possible, check the soil pH of your lawn because it will tell you whether it is compacted and other important characteristics of your soil.



Leaf Clean-up:

Don't leave fallen leaves in sodden layers on the lawn. You can shred the leaves and then place the leaves either in a spare garbage can or any other dry place to add them to your compost pile. Also, you can use the shredded leaves for garden mulch.



Vegetable Gardens:

After the final harvest for the season, remove old plant matter from the garden as the plant is likely to become susceptible to disease in the following growing season. Also, to protect your topsoil from the hardships of winter, you can either plant a cover crop for large beds or apply mulch.

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Perennial Beds

They should be cleaned up and mulched as part of your garden work in the fall so that your beds will look tidier over winter and be ready for growth come spring. Also, if you are not able to mulch your perennial beds in the fall, then use the old stalks and leaves as a makeshift mulch. That way, the roots of your perennials will have a certain degree of protection from the winter weather.



Trees and Shrubs:

Winterize small deciduous shrubs that have fragile branches with a lean-to or some other sort of structure to keep heavy snows off their limbs. Also, clear your lawn of any garden tools and tree leaves that can smother your lawn in the fall and block nutrients it needs to stay healthy. Scrub down and put away your tools. Some folks oil their tools with vegetable oil to avoid rust.

Find out how to care for your gardening tools.

Moreover, turn off your water so that the hose or irrigation connected will not frost, or you may have damage. It is essential to do it in the fall because in warmer climates you can disconnect the system from a hose spigot and allow the water to drain out. Lastly, empty all of your outdoor containers to keep them from cracking during the winter. Store them upside down.

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