

Care and Clean-up of the Fall Garden

Fall is a good time for a soil test. (Rutgers Fact Sheet FS 797)

Vegetable and Annual Beds

Make notes about this year's vegetable garden layout in order to plan crop rotation for next year.

Clean up vegetable garden and annual flower beds. To reduce disease and insect problems, remove garden debris such as dead plant material and rotted vegetables.

Dig and store tender bulbs such as cannas, dahlias, tuberous begonias, and gladiolas.

Add organic matter to vegetable and flower beds.

Perennial flower beds

Remove weeds from perennial beds.

Perennials may be cut back to ground level. However, consider leaving the dead stalks of purple coneflower, black-eyed Susans, sunflowers, and other plants whose seeds or berries feeds birds through the winter.

September is the time to plant new perennials and divide established perennials. Divide spring blooming plants such as iris and dianthus. Later bloomers that can also be divided include black-eyed Susans, daylilies, hostas, coneflowers and yarrows.

After frost, mulch perennial flower beds with 1-3 inches of mulch.

Tree and shrub maintenance

Pruning of trees should be done after the trees go dormant or in the early spring.

Late summer and fall lowering shrubs can be pruned after they go dormant.

DO NOT prune spring flowering shrubs in the fall because they have already formed their flower buds for next year.

Deciduous trees and shrubs can be fertilized after they go dormant.

Bulbs

Plant spring flowering bulbs in the early fall.

Composting (Rutgers Fact Sheets FS 811 and FS 074)

Compost leaves, grass clippings and other organic matter from the yard and garden. Do not compost any organic matter that is diseased or insect infested.

Clean and store garden tools, tomato cages, etc.

Sources:

Fall Garden Cleanup: 9 Ways to Prep Your Garden for Winter

<http://www.rodale.com/print/2471>

Getting Gardens Ready for Winter

<http://www.garden.org/subchannels/care/techniques?q=show&id=2241&page=2>

Fall Vegetable and Garden Clean Up

<http://extensionhorticulture.unl.edu/Articles/SJB/FallVegGarClean.shtml>

Time for Fall Garden Clean Up

http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gardenerscorner/issue_01/fall_06_04.html