

FALL GARDEN TIPS

Fall is the time to prep your garden so you'll be ready for spring planting. Through fall and winter, the garden is exposed to elements such as wind and storms. This can leave quite a mess. Temperatures will slowly warm, but plants are still dormant. It's the perfect time to clean up. If you wait too long, you might step on spring bulbs and plants that will soon pop out of the ground.

Clear away and compost the dead stalks of perennials. They provided winter seeds for birds and other wildlife, but now it's time to clear them away. Some gardeners wait until early spring to clear away plant debris because beneficial insects over-winter in the stalks.

Late winter is a good time to prune some plants, but all plants are not pruned alike! Dead or dying limbs can be removed at any time. Late winter is a good time to prune late spring-flowering trees like butterfly bush or spirea. Spring flowering trees and shrubs, such as dogwood and azaleas, should not be pruned until after their flowers fade in the spring. Know your plant's needs before pruning. Get out the pitch fork and turn over your compost pile unless it is covered in snow. The bottom has the best organic matter.

Give your soil some care. Add compost or dehydrated manure a couple of weeks before planting. You want to give it time to mix well with your soil to avoid burning the roots of new plants.

Make a plan for the garden. Know your planting zone. Learn about native plants, and use them in your plan.

Clean out bird boxes to prevent disease and pests and to encourage pollinators to visit the garden.

Prep your garden tools. Clean with soap and water, and apply mineral spirits on wood handles. Sharpen if needed.

Attend gardening workshops and seminars to learn more about gardening and be inspired for the new gardening season!

The time you spend in fall and winter will ensure healthy plants and shrubs. You'll be ready for spring and blooms.