

## Autumn Checklist

### Landscape Plants:

- √ Spread mulch 2 - 3" deep around landscape plants
- √ Fertilizing: In October apply Root n Gro or fertilizer higher in phosphorous, such as 5-10-10, for strong root growth
- √ Fall Pruning: if it blooms in summer or fall, prune in fall;  
if it blooms in spring, don't prune in fall: prune after blooming in summer
- √ Fruit Trees: fall pruning for shaping and increased fruit production
- √ Apply dormant oil in late October up to Thanksgiving
- √ Apply anti-desiccant (Wilt Pruf) to evergreens to preserve moisture for winter
- √ Continue watering trees, shrubs, and perennials planted any time this year 1-2 times per week until Thanksgiving

### Roses:

- √ In late October to early November, remove long canes and misdirected growth
- √ Remove leaf material from ground to prevent disease carryover
- √ Spray with dormant oil and lime sulfur for disease control
- √ In mid December, or after ground freeze, mulch with 4-6" mulch to protect crown
- √ If using cones or collars, wait until Christmas for consistently cool temperatures

### Hydrangeas:

- √ Much like roses, remove long canes and misdirected growth
- √ Old-growth-bloomers prune after blooming, new-growth-bloomers prune in fall
- √ In October apply Root n Gro or fertilizer higher in phosphorous, such as 5-10-10, for strong root growth
- √ Apply mulch 2-4" deep

### Ornamental Grasses:

- √ Leave it for winter interest and the birds, cut it down to 2-4" in spring

### Perennials:

- √ After several frosts, as foliage turns brown, cut back to the ground; or, leave old foliage in place (remove in spring) for further protection through the winter
- √ Spread mulch 2-3" deep over the crown
- √ Fertilize in early to mid October, before full dormancy, with Root n Gro or fertilizer higher in phosphorous, such as 5-10-10
- √ Fall is a good time to divide many perennials

### Tropicals:

- √ Bring indoors when temperatures fall below 50-55°
- √ One week prior to bringing indoors, spray with insecticide and apply a systemic insecticide to the soil
- √ Prune or remove 1/3-1/2 of branches
- √ Reduce watering

### **Vegetable Gardens:**

- √ Remove all old plant materials (composting or tilling them in is not recommended for disease control reasons)
- √ If possible, roto-till the garden patch in fall
- √ Apply shredded yard leaves and /or compost over the soil for soil improvement and to reduce soil compaction...
- √ Or, plant a cover crop (such as Winter Rye) in early to mid September
- √ Spray tomato cages and trellises with a 1:10 mix of bleach:water for disease control
- √ Make notes of what and how much you planted and harvested so you can make informed decisions next year

### **Lawn Care:**

- √ On the last cut, leave it 2-3" in height
- √ Mid September is a great time for weed control
- √ Apply fall fertilizer in mid September to mid October
- √ Apply high nitrogen fertilizer (46-0-0) *not before Thanksgiving*
- √ Do winter seeding for spring germination around Christmas (*note: do not do winter seeding if you will be using crabgrass pre-emergent in spring*)
- √ September is a good time for aeration/dethatching, especially *before* mowing and leaf mulching

### **Fall Bulbs:**

- √ October-December is ideal for planting, as long as you can still dig the soil
- √ Dig and store tender bulbs (dahlias, caladiums, etc)

### **Fountains and Birdbaths**

- √ Drain and clean with 1:10 bleach:water solution (if the piece is painted, do a test spot or check with us for other cleaning solutions)
- √ Allow to dry thoroughly
- √ After draining, briefly plug in the pump to ensure all water is out of the pump
- √ Bring all parts into garage for the winter, if possible
- √ Or, if not possible, fill bowls with dry burlap, cover securely with plastic
- √ Bring at least the pump indoors if at all possible
- √ Birdbath bowls can be turned upside down, or an electric birdbath heater can be used

### **Pottery:**

- √ Remove plant materials and soil, wash with 1:10 bleach:water solution
- √ Allow to dry thoroughly, store indoors
- √ If they must be left outdoors, turn upside down and place saucer upside down on top
- √ Check for cracks or chips that can be repaired with cement or silicone sealers

### **Winterizing Power Equipment: (mowers, tillers, etc)**

- √ Drain fuel, or use a fuel additive to prevent gelling of fuel
- √ Clean air filters
- √ Sharpen blades
- √ (Good time for hardware stores to do this for you, because no one else will think of it until next spring when nothing works!)

### **Garden Tools:**

- √ Wash and dry well
- √ Oil metal parts to prevent rusting: a motor oil or tool oil available at hardware stores
- √ Fill a small bucket with sand, saturate with oil, and run tools in and out several times to clean and leave a coat of oil

### **Mice, Ants, and Other Creatures**

- √ Now is the time they are trying to find a winter home
  - √ Check soffits around windows, doors for caulking opportunities
  - √ Apply Bayer Multi-Purpose Insect Control around foundation
  - √ Set traps for mice
  - √ Repair screens
  - √ Do not store firewood against your foundation or home
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- √ Start a gardening calendar, recording what you do and when you do it
  - √ Record how many bags of mulch you used for easier shopping in spring and next fall
  - √ Take photos of your garden and containers, noting which flowers you loved and which did not work well where you used them
  - √ Check plant labels for fading, or missing labels
  - √ Mark plants you wish to divide or move in spring, as a reminder
  - √ Prepare dishes of bulbs for spring forcing indoors
  - √ Bring liquid fertilizers and chemicals indoors to prevent freezing; dry fertilizers and chemicals should be stored in waterproof containers to prevent caking
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- √ Drain garden hoses and bring indoors
  - √ Drain and cover rain barrels
  - √ Check to see if older spigots need to be drained
  - √ Clean gutters and downspouts
  - √ Turn compost one more time after last use/additions
  - √ Deer protection for young trees
  - √ Clean birdfeeders and fill
  - √ Wash and sterilize hummingbird feeders before storing for winter
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- √ Check snow blower for operation, or have it serviced
  - √ Find your snow shovel; assign duty to children
  - √ Place stakes along the driveway for plowing /snow blowing markers
  - √ Locate a bucket for salt/ice melt storage
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- √ Store furniture and cushions for the winter
  - √ Clean and store grill, check for gas leaks and turn off gas valves
  - √ Change furnace filters
  - √ Clean and turn on humidifier
  - √ Have chimney and flu cleaned
  - √ Check smoke detectors
  - √ Check emergency generators