



# Putting the Garden to Bed

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## Annual flower beds and vegetable gardens

- Harvest all useable vegetables and flowers from the garden (before frosts).
- Garden debris can be tilled in or composted (before ground freezes).
- Clean up weeds as they can harbor diseases and insects (before ground freezes).
- Add organic matter to the soil to enrich it and then mulch to reduce erosion (before ground freezes).

## Perennial flower beds

- Add new perennials or divide existing ones (September to mid-October).
- Cut back plants in fall (October and November, depending on weather) or early spring
  - Consider leaving some plants to feed birds or for winter beauty.
  - Cut plants back as they decline to keep garden looking good.
- After a couple of frosts, mulch beds if needed.
- Clean up weeds (before ground freezes).

## Tree and shrub maintenance

- Continue regular watering as long as soil is not frozen (especially evergreens).
- Deciduous tree and shrubs can be fertilized in fall (in dormancy, when leaves have colored and are starting to fall).
- Prune deciduous trees after they go dormant (November through March; watch for clues that the plant is dormant).
- Don't prune evergreens in fall; wait until time of new growth (usually May).
- Prune deciduous shrubs that bloom late in the season (November through March).
- Don't prune spring-flowering shrubs in fall (prune after flowering in spring).

## Lawn care

- Lawn grasses are cool season grasses and will keep growing well into autumn. Keep mowing until growth stops.
- Optional activities that may be needed in SOME lawns:
  - Dethatch if thatch layer is thicker than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch; early Sept. (Destructive process).
  - Core aerification is less destructive and can be done anytime in September.
  - Lawn establishment or repair is best done mid-August to mid-September (some years, even into early October). This is very temperature dependent.
- Fertilize in early September for early spring green up without excessive growth.
  - Low maintenance lawns may need only the September treatment.
  - High maintenance lawns will benefit from another treatment in late October.
  - If fertilizing in spring, consider a slow-release fertilizer in May.

## **House plants**

- Bring house plants inside when night temperatures fall into the lower 50's.
- Try to avoid abrupt changes in light, temperature, etc.
- Check for insects on plants before bringing them inside.
- Repot if the plant has outgrown its container.
- Some plants that have grown vigorously outside may need some pruning.

## **Miscellaneous**

- Spring-flowering bulbs: plant them from mid-September through mid-October.
- Tools: Clean garden tools so they are ready for next spring.
- Storage: Properly store seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.
- Hoses: Drain and store hoses.
- Composting: Start a compost pile to handle garden debris and autumn leaves.