

LATE
FALL

Has Your Lawn Been Winterized?

COLD WEATHER PREPARATIONS SHOULD START NOW

A little extra care this fall will help to pave the way for healthier, thicker lawn growth when spring returns. Old Man Winter has a way of sneaking up on us, so the sooner the following steps are taken, the better.

LETTING YOUR LAWN BREATHE

Fallen leaves and other organic debris should be raked up and removed to prevent smothering your grass over the winter. If you have a compost pile, these items will make a great addition. To “clear the airways” even further, your lawn should also be aerated (if it hasn’t been already).

TAKING IT DOWN A NOTCH

As the growing season winds down, mowing height should go down too. It’s best to reduce the mowing height gradually over several cuttings to avoid shocking the grass.

Mowing should continue until grass has stopped growing for the year, and the final cut of the season should be about 1”

above the thatch layer. This “short cut” will help the lawn to retain its color and resist disease over the winter months. It’s also beneficial to mulch clippings instead of bagging them, since they’ll add valuable organic matter to the soil.

FEEDING THE ROOTS

Your lawn’s root system is undergoing a growth spurt right now as it works to convert nutrients into food reserves for the winter season. The nutrients provided by a heavy fertilization this fall will promote deeper, stronger roots to fortify your turf for the colder months ahead. Plus, fall fertilization will encourage earlier and thicker green-up in the spring.

For a hardier, healthier, better-looking lawn through the winter and into the spring, winterization is just the thing! Each of the practices mentioned here can make a world of difference for your turf.



Leaves and other organic debris should be removed.



Mowing height should be reduced.



Fall fertilization will fortify turf for winter.



LAST CALL FOR AERATION...

Though we're sure you've heard us say it before, we're going to say it again: Aeration is one of the very best things that can be done for your lawn. It's an excellent way to help your turf prepare for winter, and all lawns can benefit from having this service performed at least once per year.

When your turf is aerated, a machine known as a core aerator removes thousands of plugs of soil and thatch and leaves them on the lawn surface. These plugs (or cores) eventually dissolve during rainfall or watering, mixing with the thatch layer and helping to break it down (more than 1/2" of thatch can be harmful).



Aeration reduces thatch, improves soil structure and encourages root growth.

Even better, the holes left behind by the core aerator loosen compacted soil and give turf roots more room to grow. Plus, the holes make it easier for air, water and nutrients to reach the root zone, encouraging a more extensive root system to carry your lawn through the winter and into the spring.

Reduced thatch, better soil structure, stronger roots... what more could you ask for? Aeration can and will do wonders for your lawn!

For best results, this service should be performed as soon as possible.

It's Time to Clean Up and Make Amends!

Both vegetable and flower gardens will be much more productive next year with the addition of organic soil amendments this fall. The idea behind organic amendments is to improve soil structure so that plant roots get more of the air, water and nutrients they need for healthy growth.

Before amendments can be made, however, it's necessary to clear planting beds of any unwanted items.

CLEANING UP

Spent vegetable plants and annuals should be removed and added to the compost pile (if you have one). Leaves, sticks and other organic debris should also be removed (and composted).

Since perennials will come back next year, they can stay put. But if they're due for dividing, this is the time for it. By dividing spring- and summer-blooming perennials every three to five years in the fall, plant size can be controlled and the number of perennials can be increased. Periodic division will rejuvenate perennials as well.

ADDING THE AMENDMENTS

There are several types of organic amendments that can improve soil structure for better vegetable and flower growth.



Sphagnum peat moss, finished homemade compost and well-aged cow manure are all good choices.

The best way to incorporate organic amendments is to spread out 3" to 4" over the entire planting area, then till it into the top 8" to 10" of soil. In perennial beds, it will be necessary to work around the existing plants, but the same amount of amendments should be used.

Right now is a great time for organic amendments, since soil tends to be drier and easier to work with at this time of year. Whether you're growing vegetables, flowers or both, it will be well worth the extra effort.



- Answers to photo puzzle on back page:
1. Flame is missing from second candle holder.
 2. Cucumber has been added in bowl next to stove burner.
 3. Hillside in background is higher.
 4. Another log has been added next to the fireplace.
 5. Flame is burning on stove top.
 6. Handle has been removed from bottom door on grill.
 7. Red stripe is missing from placemat.
 8. Lizard is climbing up cabinet.

Another Growing Season Comes to a Close

It's hard to believe that spring and summer are already behind us, and fall will soon be a distant memory. Where has all the time gone?

Well, when you're busy doing something you love, time does have a way of flying by. It seems like we lose track of time every year, because we really do love working with you to help your green spaces reach their true potential.

We're grateful for the confidence you have in our training and expertise. Whether we're troubleshooting a problem with a particular plant or simply taking steps to encourage healthier, more beautiful growth, you can rest assured that we're giving it our all.

This is a great time to think ahead to next season. Are there any services you'd like to add next year? Do you have any special projects in mind for your property? If so, please let us know. We'll be more than happy to answer any questions you may have, and to show you how we can be of help.

We value your feedback, so please tell us how we're doing. Clear communication with our customers enables us to improve upon the quality of our services year after year.

Thank you for your continued business, and have a great winter season. We'll see you again in the spring!



Thank you!

Keep Those Containers Cookin'!

Containers are great for housing and displaying flowers and other plants throughout the summer. During the winter, however, they need to be stored properly to avoid damage.

After clearing containers of dead vegetation and spent soil, they should be cleaned thoroughly using warm, soapy water with 10% bleach. This will prevent any pests or diseases that might be residing in the containers from surviving over the winter. Then, once the containers are dry, they'll be ready for storage.

PLASTIC CONTAINERS

As long as they're empty, plastic containers can be stored outside over the winter. The winter sun can fade their color unevenly, though, so it's a good idea to cover them up with a tarp or plastic bags.

CLAY AND TERRACOTTA CONTAINERS

Since they're porous, clay and terracotta containers retain moisture that will freeze and thaw as temperatures fluctuate over the winter. Repeated freeze-thaw cycles make these containers prone to cracking, so they shouldn't be stored outside. They should be kept indoors where temperatures won't fall below freezing. Covering them with newspaper can help to prevent chipping.

CERAMIC CONTAINERS

Though their protective coating should keep moisture out, any chips or cracks in ceramic containers may let some water in. Therefore, ceramic containers should be stored inside and covered like clay and terracotta containers.



Properly stored for the winter, your containers will stay useful for many years to come!



NOTE: This panel prints black and white on 4-page Simple Solution newsletters.

MAKING THE CUT WITH WINTER PRUNING

It's unfortunate just how many full-sized trees and shrubs must eventually be removed because they've been allowed to grow too far out of bounds. With regular, maintenance-level pruning, drastic repairs and removals can almost always be avoided.

If your trees and shrubs haven't been pruned in a while, this winter will be a great time for it. Once leaves have fallen, it's much easier to see where pruning needs to take place for a quicker, more efficient job. It's also a good bet that your yard sees less activity during the winter months. So, any pruning work this winter will be much less disruptive to you and your family.

With winter pruning, your trees and shrubs will have a tidier, more well-kempt appearance. Damage from severe weather can be prevented. Decay and disease can be stopped. Branches that overlap and rub against each other can be removed. Excessive growth that is blocking driveways, walkways and windows can be cut back.

In short, the cuts made by winter pruning will go far deeper than looks. With proper winter pruning, you can look forward to healthier, more beautiful, more valuable trees and shrubs in the year to come.



Can You Tell the Difference?

See if you can find the eight differences between the two photos. Answers are on page 2.

