

Fall Garden Chores

General Gardening

- Cut down spent perennials after the first frost. Do not prune Russian Sage or Lavender this time of year, it's best to wait until spring for these plants.
- Clean up fallen leaves under plants prone to fungal infection, especially Hydrangeas, Roses, Fruit trees and Hollyhocks – bag the clippings and dump in household trash
- Cut down ornamental grasses, making sure not to cut into the crown. It's best to leave a few extra inches about ground rather than harm the plant by cutting too low.
- Dead head Hydrangeas, if desired. This is not necessary, but does help the appearance of these plants. The fastest way is to break them off with a swift twist of the wrist.
- Weed beds for the last time in 2016! Pay particular attention to perennial weeds like grass and dandelions
- Spread a 2-3" deep layer of organic mulch (like shredded leaves or pine bark) on perennial and shrub beds to protect the soil and plants' roots over the winter.
- Tie climbing vines like roses to their supports, lightly trimming long canes that could whip around and break in brisk winter winds. For more information on fall rose care check out our Youtube video "[Fall Rose Care](#)"
- Prune butterfly bushes to within a few feet of the ground. These plants tend to heave and rock out of the soil in winter if they aren't pruned in fall
- Plant deer and rabbit resistant spring bulbs like Daffodils and Siberian Squill. Plant daffodils as deep as you can! No shallower than 7"
- Dig and store Dahlias after the first killing frost. For more information check out our Blog post, "[Overwintering Dahlias](#)"
- Wrap trunks of young trees with thin bark using tree wrap to prevent sunscald and frost cracking
- Make cylinders of wire fencing three times the diameter of the trunk and place them around any trees with skinny trunks to prevent bucks rubbing their antlers on them during the rut and damaging the bark.
- Put hardware cloth around the base of fruit trees to prevent mice, rats, voles and rabbits from chewing the bark during the winter
- Cut back the natural vegetation where it meets the lawn, using hedge trimmers or a lopper.
- Cut back the vegetation at the entrance to the driveway, making it easy to see oncoming vehicles and cyclists.

Other Chores:

- Empty containers and window boxes. Store ceramic pots and wooden window boxes inside out of the weather. Do not reuse container mix; it can become water logged and harbor disease in subsequent years.
- Unhook and coil hoses, being sure to let water drain from them. Store inside.
- Winterize outdoor spigots
- Winterize irrigation system
- If your driveway needs more shell, it's a great time to do it! The odor should be completely gone by next year.
- Give the lawn its last cut of the year. The final cut can be an inch or so shorter than normal, minimizing the leaves and debris that can accumulate and cutting down on overwintering fungal spores.
- Speak with your lawn care provider to see if your lawn would benefit from plug-aeration or dethatching
- Consider a thin dressing of compost after plug-aeration to help boost the soil fertility and soil life.
- DO NOT FERTILIZE LAWNS AFTER OCTOBER 15 OR BEFORE APRIL 15
- Install deer fencing around plants that are susceptible to deer browsing. Stand-alone fences must be at least 6' tall (taller for large beds or where deer can make a running start), while 5' fences around narrow foundation beds are generally adequate.
- Wrap burlap around boxwood in exposed locations to help with desiccation over the winter.
- Tie large boxwood with twine to help them slough off snow loads in winter without breakage.