

Prepare your yard for winter

Doug Freer

Soon, a wintery blanket of snow and ice will cover our yards. Now is the time to run through the check-list of fall yard maintenance items before it's too late.

- Remove leaves and sticks from garden beds, lawns and other areas.
- Remove annuals and other seasonal plants.
- Cut down perennials after several killing frosts.
- Divide perennials and remove unwanted plants from the garden.
- Mulch around the base of tender perennials and plants that need extra insulation during the winter. Mulch beds with compost, leaf humus or Sweet Peet.
- Dig and store tender perennials, tubers and summer bulbs.
- Cut the lawn until the air temperatures are consistently below 50° F. Don't leave the lawn tall going into winter.
- Apply the last round of lawn fertilizer when temperatures are below 50°F; this will help root development and prepare the grass for spring growth
- Plant spring flowering bulbs before the ground freezes.
- Turn off in-ground irrigation systems, drain and blow out the system.
- Drain and winterize water features.
- Empty, clean and store bird baths.
- Empty clay pots; store them in a covered, dry location for winter.
- Stop feeding the fish in the water features.
- Clean out catch basins, drains and window wells. (Better now than when they're backed up!)
- Re-edge garden beds; this will make



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Cleaning up leaves and sticks before winter is the first step to good yard maintenance.

it easier in the spring to reestablish the edges.

- Water plants one last time before coiling up the hoses, particularly evergreen plants (rhododendron, holly, azaleas, conifers, etc.).
- Spray anti-desiccant on plants, particularly broadleaved evergreens that are exposed to winter winds.
- Inspect outdoor lighting, replace bulbs as needed. Adjust timer as necessary.
- Stack fire wood up off the ground, cover with a tarp to keep dry.
- Prune plants now only for clearance along driveways, walks and buildings or to remove any damaged or diseased plant parts. Holdoff on major pruning until late winter and early spring.

Good sanitation is important to maintaining a healthy landscape. By cleaning up leaves and dead plant parts you will minimize the potential for recurring disease. A clean landscape also minimizes places that rodents and other pests can hide.

For a comprehensive season-by-season check list of lawn and garden to-do's, email info@lawnlad.com or visit www.lawnlad.com/learningcenter/aftercare.asp.

Douglas Freer is a Cleveland Heights native and is the owner of Lawn Lad, Inc., which provides residential landscape services in the Heights, www.lawnlad.com or 216-371-1935.