



Fall Garden Checklist

Fall is the perfect time to begin preparations for next year. Taking care of a few details now means fewer chores, pests and problems in the spring.

How Did Your Garden Do?

Take stock of how your plants did. Do a walk through and take notes on plant locations and performance.

Sketch out your vegetable garden. Crop rotation is important in preventing disease. In the spring, refer to your sketch and plant vegetables in different locations.

Review perennials and annuals. Note whether plants met expectations or if different plants or varieties are needed. Would a different location help? Do any perennials need to be divided? Do it now or make a list for next spring.

Landscape Clean Up

Remove diseased plants and discard them before they spread problems to other plants.

Remove annuals and cut back tops of tall herbaceous perennials after the first frost.

Or, tall perennials can be left to overwinter and provide habitat for wildlife. Many may reseed this way. Cut them back in the spring.

Spring Bulbs

Dig up tender bulbs such as gladioli, dahlia, and canna lilies. Dry them, and store in a cool, frost-free area.

Plant in October in Illinois for spring blooms. Garden centers have hardy bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, and crocus in stock in the fall.

Plant bulbs two to three times as deep as the length of the bulb, measured from the bottom of the bulb.

Plant groups of bulbs together for the greatest visual impact and large drifts or waves of color.

Or, plant bulbs with other perennials and shrubs to screen the foliage after blooms fade.

Tools

Clean, oil, and sharpen your garden tools before putting them away for the winter.

Leaves and Compost

Do not let fallen leaves accumulate and mat down over grass, which actively grows again before winter. Fallen leaves can be used as winter mulch around tender plants or locate them so they are handy to use as mulch next year. Or, use leaves to start a compost pile.

How to Start a Compost Pile:

1. Pick a shady, moist spot.
2. Use one-part green materials and two-parts brown materials. Add in alternating layers.
3. Do not add diseased or pesticide treated plants, weeds with seed heads, twigs, meat or bones, dairy products, human, or pet waste.
4. Occasionally adding non-glossy paper or a bit of soil.
5. Turn monthly to aerate and mix.

Greens (nitrogen): Kitchen scraps and coffee grounds, fresh grass clippings, grass/grain-fed livestock manure.

Browns (carbon): Fallen leaves, non-glossy shredded paper or cardboard, wood ash, straw, sawdust, hair trimmings.

Container Plants

Add annuals and container soil to a compost pile.

Clean containers with a mild bleach solution of 10-parts water, one-part bleach.

Bring tender perennials and tropical plants indoors when temperatures drop below 55°F. Inspect for pests and diseases.

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