



Horticulture Tips - Snuggling up the Garden

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November is your last chance to attend to your garden bed, pull the covers up under its chin, and whisper it good season for several months to come.

There's lots to do and this partial list will finish your chores:

- Rake leaves from the lawn unless there are few; then mulch them with the mower.
- Water all plants thoroughly as late in the season as possible. You want them full of water so they can better endure the winter's sun.
- Especially water broadleaf evergreens any recent transplants, or this year plantings [they sweat in the sun; but frozen ground can not replenish the water lost].
- Add organic matter to support that leap of spring growth. Leave leaves in the garden to provide insulation, shelter for little critters, and to make mulch in the spring. Do, however, rake them away from your foundation. Don't fill the garden with leaves until all green matter has died.
- Mulch newer plantings with 3-6" of leaves, mulch, and/or soil.
- Prune any dead wood or broken branches from trees and shrubs. Refrain from cutting perennials to the ground. Save some for winter interest in your garden and those that you prefer to cut, leave 6" of stem to collect and hold snow for insulation. Any with seed heads are needed by the birds.
- With pruning shears, remove suckers from the base of trees, non-suckering shrubs, and rose bushes. Any plant on a rootstock [like a tree peony], remove those suckers also.
- With annuals, cut to the ground level but leave the roots in the ground; they will decompose, add organic matter at a deeper level and also help reduce soil erosion.
- Dig out weeds that persist and clear gardens of fallen fruits like apples, zucchini, and tomatoes as they make cozy homes and food for pests and diseases.
- Plant spring bulbs; add bone meal to the hole and swirl it around before adding the bulb. Cover with soil and tamp in place.
- Add last dose of lime to lilacs; acid loving shrubs [rhodas, azaleas, hollies, etc.]. They may need some bone meal, too
- Do a soil test with all the information you need at www.soiltest.edu. You will be sent the names of amendments and dosages that the soil needs; apply in the spring.
- Clean pots, tools, and containers thoroughly. Sand wooden handles and paint or seal. Sharpen shovels, tune up snow blowers, and fetch sand for icy paths. Avoid salt to treat ice as it contaminates the water table and gets into your lawn and beds.
- Clean bird feeders and baths with a 1:10 solution of vinegar:water. Stock up on different kinds of seeds, a variety of feeders, and a device to keep water for drinking and bathing thawed. Place them where you can watch the birds and where they will be easily accessed for cleaning and re-filling. Make sure shrubs and evergreens are nearby for a fast get-away should a predator approach while they dine or bathe.
- Tender plants and bulbs should be dug and moved to warmer temperatures. Some you may want to keep as houseplants until the spring.
- Have your irrigation system bled; hang hoses over doors to empty of water then coil and store inside. Turn off water to the outdoor faucets. Empty fountains and prepare pools and fish ponds for the impending season.
- Take a long winter's nap and soon the seed and plant catalogues arrive!

