

Putting the Yard to Bed

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Now is the time to start getting the yard ready for winter. If you have not taken care of the bugs coming in for the winter now is the time to help prevent them from coming in. Also mice and other rodents might be looking at coming in for the winter. Using baits outside is one method of control. There are lots of bait stations available or you can make some by using a piece of pvc pipe say at least two one foot sections with a 90 degree elbow connecting them, then just put the bait in and slide it to the middle, which should keep pets out of it. Also caulk all small opening around the house to discourage them from getting in the house.

Needle drop on pine trees not spruces is starting to show. This happens every year in the fall and people have a tendency to panic. The number of needles dropped depends almost entirely on the type of pine tree. But what happens are the needles that grew three to five years ago will start to turn brown and fall off. If you get a year when two years growths of needles drop off this can be quite startling, but it is normal too loose the inside needles. If the outside needles start to turn brown then you could have something else going on. With such a dry summer we have had we could see lots of needle drop this year and for the next couple of years.

Since we have received very little rain lately and with warm temperatures do not forget to keep watering all perennials including the grass. It does not take as much water this time of year, but everything needs a good drink of water before winter gets here. With the nice fall we are having there are some good buys at most garden centers, and until the ground freezes up is a good time to get some perennials in the ground and building up a good root system. Also given the weather this fall, if you have some bare spots in your yard, adding some grass seed now and racking it in will help fill those spots in by next spring.

If you have not received a killing frost, enjoy the benefits of a late garden season. However after a frost and the garden is done, this is a good time to incorporate lots of organic material into the garden or flower beds. The winter time with the freeze and thaw activities helps to break down this organic material and will incorporate this material into the soil for the plants next year. Any other cleanup or other soil building materials such as sand or phosphorous can also be added this time of year. Remember to remove any diseased plants from the garden. If you had a disease issue in the garden, after it is tilled up, and moisture is added, put some clear plastic over the area and leave it for two weeks now, then remove it and if the daytime temperatures were not hot enough put it back on next April for two weeks when the daytime temperatures are above say 70 degrees (warmer the better) this will help kill some of the pathogens in the soil.

Now is also probably the best time of the year to control those hard to control weeds. All plants are moving nutrients to the root systems this time of the year so they will also carry herbicides with them. Remember to follow the directions on the label and it does not take as much herbicide this time of year. Enjoy the outdoors.

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