

Tucking In Your Garden For A Long Winter's Nap

With wonderful spicy fall aromas in the air and much of the autumn color still to be admired, November is the time to prepare for winter and make proper arrangements to ensure a successful garden in spring. Below are some helpful reminders and ideas of things you should consider as we wind down the fall season and head into winter.

Maintain Your Landscape Investment Wisely

You might be wondering why it is important to prepare for winter. After many years of maintaining home owner's properties and continuously correcting poor maintenance applications done before us, I can speak firsthand about preventative plant health care. You already have a gorgeous property that is maintained well throughout the summer; that same care should be continued for fall and winter.



Barry's top maintenance applications to complete now in order to help your landscape overwinter properly:

- Fall fertilize to enhance root health
- Prune to provide overall plant health care
- Prune to prevent winter storm damage
- Winter-wrap (burlap) broadleaf evergreens
- Mulch properly (but do not pile mulch against plant bases!)
- Apply repellents to prevent deer damage
- Wrap tree trunks/deer desirable plants with temporary wire fencing to protect from damage and grazing

Fall Fertilizing = Stronger Roots

We all know that fall is the best time for planting; it's also the best time for fertilizing. Taking the time to fertilize in the fall will strengthen your plant's and lawn's roots, giving them a strong base on which to thrive next spring. By helping roots grow before winter sets in, you are ensuring that the lawn will green-up quicker in the spring. When plants are fertilized in the fall, you'll have stronger plants with more flowers by next spring. When you have strong roots, you have healthy plants with numerous flowers. So push those roots now!

Proactive Pruning

While some pruning is done in the spring, certain plants require grooming now to ensure a successful flush of growth and flowers next year. For most trees, the best time to prune is late winter to early spring. Pruning in late summer and early fall may stimulate new growth that will have little time to harden before cold weather comes, possibly harming tender new growth. Evaluate trees surrounding your house and property that may pose potential hazards during winter ice storms. This is also a good time to prune and provide overall plant health care for perennials and shrubs. Always remove dead, diseased, and damaged wood as soon as possible – for health and your safety.

Winterize Plants

Broadleaf evergreens (boxwood, holly, rhododendron, etc.) and other plants exposed to high winds should be winter-wrapped for protection and insulation from the cold. Burlap is an effective screen against the wind and will shade the plant from the sun. Mulching for the winter will also protect plants from drastic temperature changes in the soil, insulating them against extreme cold, and also prevents soil erosion. Since evergreens lose moisture through their leaves in winter, consider applying an anti-transpirant or anti-desiccant to help reduce moisture loss. It's a good idea to also water your garden thoroughly before the ground freezes. Even with snow, winter can be very dry and harsh for many trees and shrubs; it's best to provide them with a large supply of moisture before the extreme winter weather arrives.

Act Now, Relax Later

Before that North wind blows, please allow me to evaluate your property and determine the best measures to be taken now in order to protect your landscape from winter's harsh conditions. You have already invested time and money in making your property wonderful in summer – be sure to keep it that way by implementing proper maintenance applications. Once you have completed these necessary tasks, you can curl up by the fire and take comfort that your yard is "tucked-in" before winter takes hold. So reach for that apple toddy and relish all those wonderful harvest aromas that make this time of year beautiful!