

Gardening in Asotin County

October – November - December

In November, mound mulch 6 to 8 inches high around the base of rose bushes and prune back to canes enough to keep them from whipping around in the wind.

Uses for leaves – if composting is not in your plans for this year - there are other ways to use this valuable natural resource:

- Fill the paths between raised beds now, for fewer weeds next spring.
- Till leaves into the soil in fall to break down by spring.
- Fill bags of leaves and use as insulation around cold frames.
- Use as a winter mulch on bare ground to reduce erosion.



Don't be alarmed to see brown needles on pine branches. It is normal at this time of the year for evergreen trees to lose their needles closest to the trunk. (The older inner foliage of the Red Cedar may be a bright red before it falls.)

While many herbs are perennial and can over-winter outdoors with light mulching, you can dig up whole plants or sections of herbs, pot them and bring them indoors to a sunny location for use all winter.

Winterize lawn mowers by scraping off all dirt, rust and accumulated grass. Remove the sparkplug and drain out excess oil and gasoline. Replace with new oil and store lawn mower in a dry place.

Clean, oil and mend all hand tools. A thin layer of oil will prevent rust. Sand, if necessary, and repaint handles or identification marks that have faded over the summer. Sharpen all blades and remove any rust.

Give extra water to evergreen shrubs and trees before the ground freezes to prevent winter burn. Rhododendrons, Laurel and Oregon Grape are especially prone to winter burn.

Prepare the vegetable garden for winter by tilling crop debris into the garden or putting it on the compost pile. Plant material that is diseased should be disposed of unless it will be composted where the temperature in the pile is hot enough to kill disease organisms.

Adopt good orchard practices, even if you have only a few fruit trees in your yard. A good control program will include the destruction of harboring places for insects and diseases.

- Remove and destroy dropped fruit.
- Rake and dispose of fallen leaves.
- Prune and destroy all dead or diseased limbs, branches and twigs.

Winterize your roses in late fall by adding mulch to protect the bud graft. Canes can be cut down to approximately 3 feet in height after the first killing frost.

Add “green manure” to your garden. Plant a cover crop, such as winter rye or vetch, in the fall and till under in the spring before any of the plants start to flower. Green manure adds organic matter to the soil and reduces winter and spring weeds.

Protect branches on loosely branched evergreen shrubs such as arborvitae and yews from heavy snow and ice build-up. Tie the branches up with twine but do not cover shrubs in plastic or burlap wrap.

Be careful using de-icers on walks and border lawns and perennial beds. Most de-icers are fertilizers containing salts and if over applied they will burn plants and turf. Rock salt and table salt are also very harmful to plants and will damage cement/concrete walks or steps. It is better to use sand on icy walkways or steps.

Good gifts for gardeners include:

- Good quality hand tools (shears, trowels, short hand rakes)
- Decorative faucets
- Permanent plant markers
- Garden glove or hats
- Bird feeders
- Bulb for forcing indoors
- Cut or dried flower supplies (books, clippers, tape, wire, vases)
- Plant stands
- Gift certificates or subscriptions to gardening magazines
- Garden Journals