

Gardens –Clean up plant debris and add to compost pile or spade into soil. Destroy any diseased or pest-infested material. Compost, shredded leaves, or aged manure can be turned into the soil to decompose over winter. Fall is a good time to plant cover crops, such as winter rye, to improve the soil and minimize soil erosion.

General clean up - Good garden sanitation is essential to avoid providing a breeding place for diseases and garden pests. Remove dead plants from vegetable and annual gardens. Rake up and dispose of all fallen fruit and leaves. Disease-free leaves can be used as mulch. In borders, leaves from healthy plants can remain where they fall. Pine needles make excellent winter mulch for tender plants. Weeding now eliminates places for over wintering garden pests and cuts down on weeds next spring.

*Information from WSU/Spokane County
Extension Master Gardeners*



**For more information:
Contact the Master Gardener
Diagnostic Clinic
May through September**

Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

WSU Extension Office
507 N Nanum, Room 2
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Phone: (509) 962-7507
Upper County Toll Free: (509) 674-2584
Ext. 507

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of non-compliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office. Trade names may have been used to simplify the presentation of information. No endorsement of products is intended.

Master Gardener Program

Fall Lawn and Garden Clean-up



Karen Raymond
WSU Master Gardener

Fall Garden Clean-up

A few chores completed in the fall will eliminate a lot of work and problems the following spring. Following is a list of important jobs to be done.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Water - Both deciduous and evergreen plants need deep watering in the fall, but watering evergreen trees and shrubs tops the list of fall chores. Needles and leaves continue to transpire and lose moisture, especially on windy and sunny days. If water is not available to the roots, they will suffer winter burn and the damage will not be seen until the following spring and summer. Give plants several good soakings before the ground freezes. Don't forget to water plants under the eaves of buildings.



Trunk protection - Trunks of young trees are susceptible to winter injury, especially those with thin or dark bark. On sunny winter days, the bark on the southwest side of trees warms and expands, causing the bark to split. This can lead to disease and decay later on. Painting the trunks with indoor white latex paint diluted with an equal amount of water or wrapping the trunks can prevent this. Commercial tree wrap products are available at garden centers. Remove the wrap in spring.

Fruit trees - Good sanitation is important. Remove all fallen fruit, leaves and dead branches. When left on the ground they provide a breeding place for diseases and a refuge for pests. Spray peach, apricot and cherry trees with Microcop or other copper sprays for Coryneum Blight and to combat canker diseases during the dormant season. Peaches: Spray for Peach Leaf Curl in February.



Pyramid shrubs - To prevent breakage from the weight of ice or snow, wrap a rope in a downward spiral from the top of the shrub. To support very narrow plants, pound a stake 8" from the main trunk and fasten shrub to it.

Transplanting - In our climate, it is best to wait until spring to transplant most trees and shrubs, particularly evergreens. When planted in the fall, most trees and shrubs do not have enough time to develop a healthy root system before the colder weather sets in, making them vulnerable to winter burn.



LAWNS – PERENNIALS – BERRIES – ROSES and GARDENS

Lawns - Fertilize lawns for the last time in early October. Use a fertilizer with the first number (%) lower than the second and third numbers. Rake leaves from lawn area. Keep mowing lawns as needed. Make the last mowing slightly higher than usual.

Perennials & herbs - Care varies widely with type of plant. In general, remove all dead and diseased leaves and flower stalks. Tender perennials/herbs are plants that cannot tolerate - 20 degrees F. For these and fall planted ones, mulching is recommended. Apply mulch after the ground freezes to keep the ground frozen. Use pine needles, straw or leaves. Cover loosely with lightweight branches to keep mulch in place. For specific plant needs consult gardening books or call WSU Master Gardeners at (509) 962-7505.

Berries - Raspberries: Cut summer-bearing brown canes to the ground and leave new green canes to fruit next year. Once leaves drop, cut these long canes to four feet high.

Strawberries: Remove old leaves and any foliage lying on the ground. Reduce watering as growth slows. Cover the plants with 6" of mulch when temperatures fall below the low 20's.

Roses - Deep watering is a must. Tie tall canes together to keep the snow from breaking them and wait until mid-April to prune. Remove all diseased leaves and destroy. Cover the bud union with at least a foot of soil. Do not take the soil from around the rose, but get it from another area of the garden. Cover with two feet of loose mulch, such as pine needles, large leaves, etc.