



## FALL GARDENING TASKS

TASK	Yes or No	WHY?
Should you wait until spring to over-seed and/or renovate the lawn?	No	Now is the time folks! And fertilizing in September is essential to maintaining a healthy <u>lawn</u> because fall is the optimum growth period for cool-season grasses.
Should you fertilize trees/shrubs now?	No	Winter damage could occur! <u>Fertilizing</u> will stimulate growth. In addition, make sure you know which <u>trees/shrubs</u> are suitable for <u>fall plantings</u> . <i>Side-note: Don't shear your <u>evergreens</u> (the tips can turn brown as the winter winds whip, which will cause dieback).</i>
Should you prune fruit trees now?	No	Not so fast! <u>Pruning</u> in fall can incur winter damage (or even kill). Once you prune, the tree uses energy to produce new side shoots, leaves, and branches...a disaster in a hard winter. Wait until February-March (and don't forget to apply dormant oil then too)!
Should you prune ornamental grasses now?	Yes	It is much easier to <u>prune grasses</u> now than spring (when the new growth starts forming).
Do you divide perennials now?	Yes & No	Divide <u>perennials</u> right after flowering in spring (if they are spring and summer blooming) OR wait until fall (just make sure the plant is not in bloom). This forces the energy into root and leaf growth. Dividing will rejuvenate the plant (reduce disease occurrence), stimulate new growth, control the size of the plant, and increase the number of plants. <i>Side-note: If <u>perennials</u> are fall blooming, wait until spring...</i>
Do you plant bulbs now?	Yes & No	Spring bloomers like daffodils, crocus, hyacinths, and tulips should be planted in the fall. They require a period of dormancy in very cold temps to stimulate their roots, which begin developing inside the <u>bulbs</u> . Dahlias, glads, lilies, canna and calla lilies should be planted in spring after soil warms up. <i>Side note: Don't store bulbs near fruit...the ethylene gas can kill the flower inside the bulb.</i>

TASK	Yes or No	WHY?
Should you sow wildflower seeds now?	Yes & No	Sow seeds AFTER first fall frost (dormant planting) to take advantage of spring rains and ensure a jump on germination and less weed competition. BUT if you don't get them planted in the fall, you can always wait until spring. Watering is the critical component (as well as making sure there is no germination during the cold months). <u>Pollinators</u> love wildflowers!
Should you treat for grubworms now?	Yes & No	Do you know what <u>grubs</u> are? BEETLES! They burrow deep in the soil to feed on vegetation in winter, making this the time of year to treat since they are closer to the surface (curative). They are actively feeding now. Go home and treat immediately because they will soon start descending downward for the winter and you will need to wait until spring (preventative)...
There is no need to clean out mummified fruit and/or berries prior to winter?	No	Yes there is! BURN that diseased material! All those <u>mummified fruits</u> and berries are harboring disease, aka fungal spores! Burning reduces overwintering of the spores.
Now is the time to clean out all trellises, stakes, cages and tools from the garden?	Yes	Yes indeed! All these items transfer disease (and even <u>insects</u> ), so clean it out and clean it up. DON'T till any infected plants into your garden!!! Fungal spores and eggs overwinter...BURN to increase odds of reducing these overwinter! A ½ cup bleach in a gallon of water will do the trick. Just wipe them dry before storing and you will be all set for spring 2019.
How about clearing/cleaning out the garden of all spent plants?	Yes	Absolutely! As plants begin to die off, so does their resistance to disease. Withering veggie plants become a hotspot for fungus, mold and disease (which can then be transferred to soil to give you troubles next year). <u>Decaying plants</u> also invite unwanted pests to the garden where they too will take up residence (laying larvae) and feast upon all your hard work next year. <i>Side-note: Rotting fruit drop seeds which can become weeds for next year.</i>

TASK	Yes or No	WHY?
Should you start thinking about and planning your 2019 garden now?	Yes	Keeping notes throughout the garden season provides an excellent <u>snapshot of issues</u> (diseases and insect pressure, watering needs, etc.) you can expect in the future. Planning now also gives you ample time to seek out <u>new varieties</u> related to your needs, interests, and likes.
Planting a cover crop is not necessary?	No	<u>Cover crops</u> enhance overall soil tilth and health. Leaving soil bare is a no-no! Bare soil is never a good practice. The weeds WILL take over! <i>Side-note: In addition, adding compost to your garden throughout the winter months builds soil structure.</i>
Should you clear/grub land now?	Yes & No	Do you like having <u>wildlife</u> in an around your property? If so, hold off on clearing plots of land until spring so you will not be removing the habitat for <u>birds</u> and such. If <u>wildlife cover</u> is not an issue, now is a good time...
Should you soil test now?	Yes	YES! If your <u>soil test</u> recommends an application of lime, fall is the best time of year to apply, so to achieve more bang for your buck, <u>soil test</u> now! <i>Side-note: Application of lime in fall is enhanced by the freezing/thawing cycle in winter (which increases soil porosity).</i>
Should you treat bagworms now?	Yes & No	<u>Bagworms</u> overwinter in the bag, hatching in late April-early May, eating and spinning the large bags we see this time of year. Control is best when they emerge in the spring as crawlers because they are smaller. The bags this time of year are impervious to spray materials, but hand-picking the bags now guarantees no crawlers in the spring (though impractical on large trees). Hold off on chemical control until spring when the will be most effective.



## Fall Task List

1. Renovate and/or seed a lawn
2. Soil test now (and lime if needed)
3. Plant cover crops
4. Sow wildflowers (after first frost)
5. Prune ornamental grasses
6. Plant bulbs
7. Divide perennials
8. Treat for grub-worms (Hurry! Otherwise wait until spring)
9. Dispose of all mummified fruits and berries (burn)
10. Prepare garden veggie storage areas
11. Plan for 2019 garden
12. Clean up garden area and disinfect all cages, stakes, etc. Remove all material and dispose of diseased plants.



### Did you know?

- As plants begin to die off, so does their resistance to disease...
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- Decaying plants also invite unwanted pests to the garden where they too will take up residence (laying larvae) and feast upon all your hard work next year.
- Rotting fruit drop seeds which can become weeds for next year.

