

November 2021

Fall is not the time to prune woody plants other than pruning-out diseased or dead branches. Wait until early spring to prune Rhododendrons, Forsythia, Azaleas, and Lilacs. If spring flowering plants are pruned now, the flower buds for next year will be cut off. Prune these shrubs after flowering next spring.

Clean out and remove debris, diseased and dead plants from vegetable gardens and herbaceous borders. Insect and disease infected plants should be removed as these insect and disease pests often over-winter in plant debris. Try to balance how much you take out of the garden in order to support pollinators and wildlife which overwinter in fallen leaves, brush piles and un-mowed areas.

Continue to water trees & shrubs until the ground freezes. Drain irrigation systems, hoses, and any other watering equipment. Clean the leaves from the gutters. Empty or move containers under cover to prevent them from cracking when the soil freezes.

Avoid fertilizing, because it can disrupt the hardening-off process. Slow-release fertilizers and compost are the exception, because unlike quick-release synthetic fertilizers, they won't cause a flush of new growth.

Don't bag and remove the fallen leaves. They contain a wealth of nutrients. Chop or run over them with a lawn mower and distribute them around trees and shrubs. This valuable plant material improves the soil structure. Once the ground freezes apply 2-3 inches of this organic mulch around woody plants keeping it a few inches from stems and trunks of trees.

Avoid storing firewood indoors, as it may be a source of insects through the winter. Most would not be injurious to your home but may be a nuisance as they crawl or fly about.

Be sure to winterize all the power tools after the gardening chores are finished this fall. Clean and sharpen hand tools. This assures proper winter storage and you can avoid the spring rush.

Now is a great time to decide what worked well in the garden and what didn't. Take notes for next year for transplanting, dividing, and new projects.