

# FALL Checklist

*It's almost bedtime*



**Cleanup:** Rake fallen leaves and add to compost. If the now-brown top growth of herbaceous perennials bothers you, you can cut them back to the ground, but some grasses, seed heads and berries look great in the winter. Bird will appreciate the food and hiding places. Remove any dead or diseased branches but delay severe pruning until spring.

**Water:** Dry days will require you to continue watering your plants, especially those under eaves or raised decks. Protect tender plants from getting sogged out. Winter wet and freezing/thawing cycles hurt more than cold snaps.

**Plant:** Take advantage of fall sales and continue to plant. Empty spots may be appearing in your borders or pots as early season plants become spent. Pop in fall bloomers for a new lease on life until a hard freeze. Transplant trees or shrubs as they enter dormancy. Dig, divide overcrowded perennials like Shasta daisies, bearded iris and daylilies. Plant spring-blooming bulbs.

**Harvest:** Continue to graze and will your tomatoes to ripen! Vegetables that contain seeds get tougher and less edible as the seeds mature, so pick them a little early. These include beans, cucumbers, eggplant and squash. I know, it's fun to harvest a 2' long zucchini!

**Patrol:** Control slugs and snails before they lay more eggs.

**Lawns:** If you only fertilize your lawn once a year, this is the best time to do it. Start or repair cool-season lawns.

**Weed:** This goes hand in hand with sprucing up your lawn. Get rid of broadleaf weeds. The best defense against lawn weeds is to aerate then over-seed, wait a week, and then fertilize. You can put down cardboard/mulch in other areas to help suppress weeds.

**Replant:** Put in a second crop of veggies and herbs for an extended harvest. Fresh lettuce starts, parsley, and basil will ensure good eating. Sow seeds for mid-season crops directly into the garden this month.

**Amend & Mulch:** Improve your soil. Add compost and lime if your soil is acidic. A layer of mulch around shrubs and woody perennials will keep down weeds and provide some insulation. Put on a fresh face for fall! Mulch around trees and bushes. A 2"-4" layer of shredded leaves, straw or fine bark helps insulate the soil and prevent winter "heave"--the process of freezing and thawing which can literally wrench plants and roots out of the ground. Don't pile mulch right up against the branches or trunk.

**Protect:** Wrap tender or newly planted perennials & shrubs with frost cloth during hard freezes (25°F or lower) and remember to remove the cloth when it warms up during the day.