

Putting the Garden to Bed for Winter



*Presented by
Walton County
Master Gardener
Extension Volunteers*

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Saying Goodbye to the Summer Garden

- October is often the month that we say **goodbye to the Summer garden** and “put it to bed.”
- Many gardeners like to perform a **garden clean-up** at the end of the season before the onset of winter.
- Usually this means **cutting back perennials, pulling up spent vegetables and annuals, and raking up leaves** as they drop from the trees and shrubs.
- In addition, some annuals and tender **bulbs can be dug** up and brought indoors to use again next season, and marginally hardy perennials and evergreen shrubs can be protected to help them come through the winter without too much damage.



In the Kitchen Garden...

- Harvest any summer vegetables still left; remove plants.
 - Green tomatoes can be put into brown paper bags and stored in a cool dry place to ripen slowly
- Cool weather vegetables like lettuce and other winter greens really start coming in about this time.
- Frost-tender plants like lettuce can be protected on really cold nights with a row cover and will last well into December.
- Cold tolerant greens like collards taste better after a frost.
 - The carbohydrates at that point are converted to sugars.



Herbs

- Gather up annual herbs such as basil before the cold sets in.
- They can be processed as pesto, stored in oil, and even frozen in ice cube trays.
- Drying is an option that works well for basil and many other herbs for use later this winter.



Sanitation in the Garden

- Once all your summer vegetables are harvested, remove old spent plants as well as any foliage that has fallen on the soil.
- The destruction of harboring places for insects and diseases plays a large part in any good sanitation program.



Mulching

- Finish by mulching the beds with straw or chopped leaves.
- These mulches can be turned into the soil next spring to help fertilize next year's crops.
- You can even use layers of newspaper or cardboard to help suppress weeds even more, and this will break down.



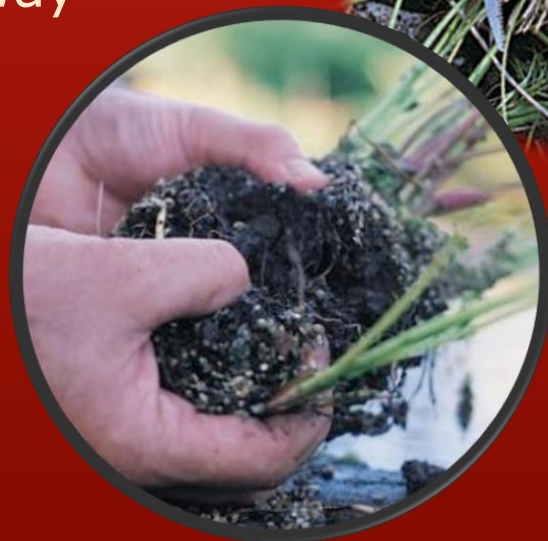
Perennials

- Tidy up the perennial beds.
- Any plant you suspect might be diseased should be removed.
- Otherwise, removing the stalks and foliage of perennials is a matter of choice.
 - Cut them down if you want a neat look.
 - To provide seed heads for birds, leave them.
- You will want to weed one last time and then give everything a good layer of mulch.
 - After the ground is good and cold, mulch around the crowns of your plant to reduce the chance of frost heaving.
 - Heaving is the formation of ice in the soil the causes the soil to buckle,. Then when the soil thaws, the root system is pushed out of the ground.



Dividing perennials

- Perennials that are overcrowded or are growing in a ring shape with the center portion missing should be divided now.
- Find a new spot in your garden or give them away to neighbors.



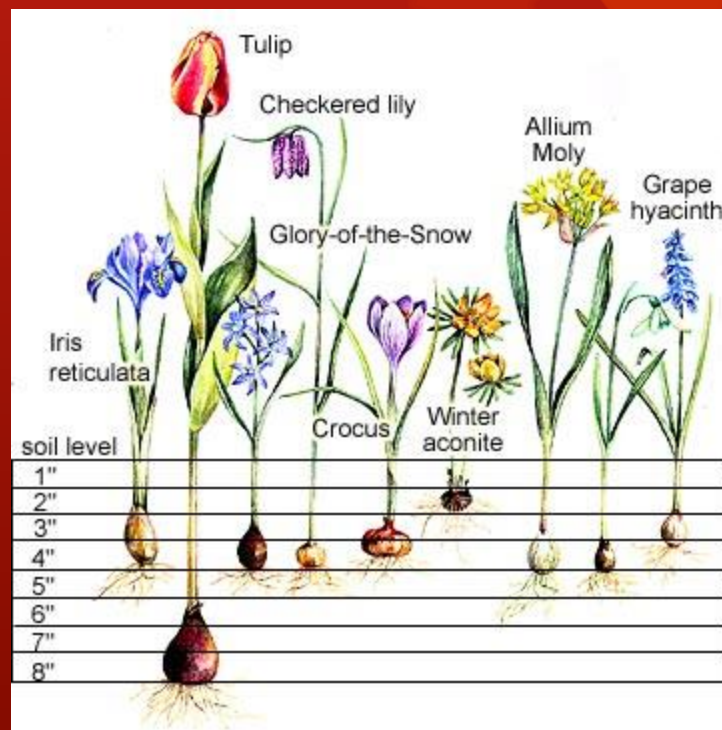
Ornamental grasses

Most people leave **ornamental grasses** standing for the winter to **blow in the wind** and add that rustling sound to the landscape while **providing a habitat for the birds** in winter.



Perennials- Spring Bulbs

- Now is the time to plant spring bulbs so you will have a vibrant spring full of color.
- These include tulips, daffodils, crocus, hyacinth, and so many others.
- Planting can continue all the way up till the ground freezes, so take advantage of those late season sales.
- Broadcast the bulbs and plant them where they land.
 - This is called **naturalizing**.



Tender Bulbs

- Lift tender bulbs such as tuberous begonia, caladium, and elephant ear.
- Gladiolas should also be dug so that you can spread out the flower production next summer by planting them successively for several weeks in the spring.
- Most dahlias will winter ok, as will lilies and cannas.
 - Those lifted should be dug carefully and stored in a cool dry dark location.
 - You will want to check periodically during the winter.



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Cool weather flowers

- Remember to plant your cool weather annuals such as **pansies** and **dianthus**.
- These will add color to the winter garden.



Pruning

- **Resist pruning!**
- Pruning trees and shrubs now might stimulate tender young growth that would not withstand the cold temperatures.
- Wait to prune deciduous trees and shrubs that need shaping until the **plants are dormant.**



Lawns

- Lawns could use preparation now for next spring.
- Aerate if the soil is compacted.
 - This will allow the soil to drain better and give the roots much needed oxygen.
- Seeding should also be done in the fall and is best done after aeration takes place.
- Seeding of **cool season grasses** early in fall will give the new roots plenty of time to become established before winter.



Soils

- Perform soil testing now!
- When you receive your soil test results, now would be the time to add any recommended amendments such as lime.
 - Winter rains and the alternating cooling and thawing will help incorporate them into the soil.



Lawn – Fall leaves

- Make sure fall leaves have been removed from the lawn.
 - Can be mowed/mulched right on the lawn if you have a mulching mower
- Leaves left on the lawn will cut off the sunlight to the grass and trap moisture, which can encourage fungus diseases.



Composting

- Composting is a great way to recycle leaves and turn them into a valuable product that can be added back into our gardens.
- Composting also destroys most weeds with the exception of pigweed seeds.



Winterizing Tools

- Winterize gas powered tools like the lawn mower, weed eater, tiller, etc.
 - Empty the gasoline.
 - Change the oil.
 - Clean the air filter.
 - Oil the spark plug.
 - Clean the engine.
- Taking these precautionary steps now will ensure that your mower will start with no difficulty when spring comes around again.



Hand Tools

- Clean off old caked-on dirt and debris.
- Sharpen the edges of the shovels and hoes by running them in a bucket of sand that has old motor oil in it.
- Clean and oil the handles of tools.
- Sharpen the blades of your pruners and mower blade so they will be ready first thing come spring.



Containers

Bring in any containers that might freeze like **terracotta planters**, **concrete urns**, or even **ceramic containers** such as this ceramic fountain.



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Fruit trees

- Pick up any fallen fruit or fruit remaining on the tree.
 - This reduces the chance that pests such as the apple maggot and coddling moth will overwinter and wreak havoc next year.
 - Diseases like brown rot are also reduced.
- Mummified fruit should also be removed.



Fruit- Strawberries

- Mulch strawberries with straw for winter protection after night-time temperatures drop below freezing.
 - This will also help if deer are a problem.
- Consider using row covers such as remay.
 - Remy is a row cover material made of a woven polyethylene material that will offer several degrees of protection against the cold



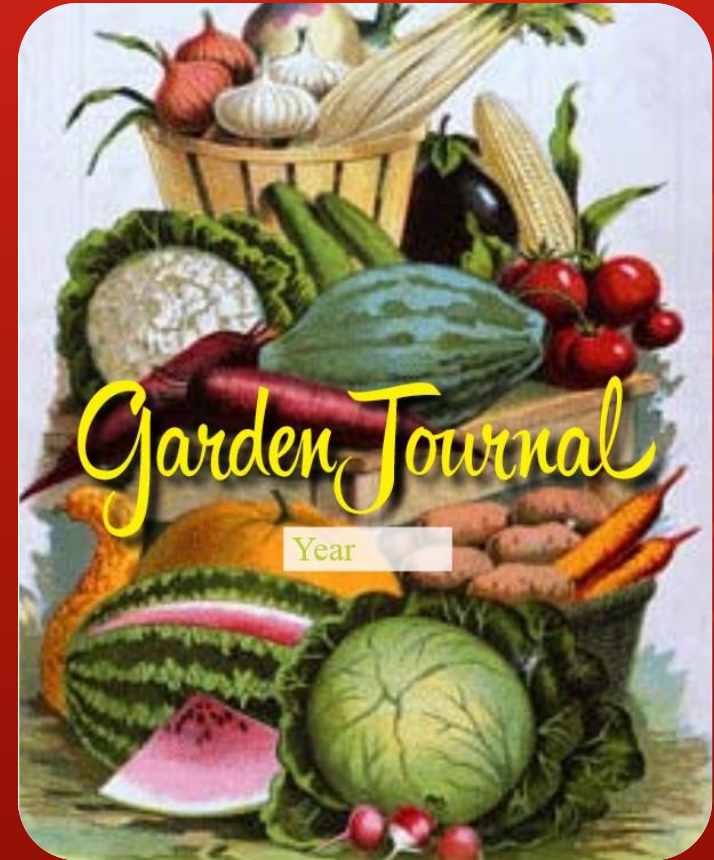
Houseplants

- Houseplants growing outside should be prepared to be brought back inside.
 - Look them over for any signs of insects and treat as needed
 - Prune or repot any that need it
- Move to a shady area for a few days prior to moving inside as a means of acclimating them to the low light conditions they will have inside.
- Force the buds on Thanksgiving or Christmas cactus by placing in a cool (55-60 degree) room and 13 hours of darkness.
- Pot up paper whites and amaryllis for holiday blooming.
- Lightly fertilize indoor plants in fall then discontinue on most for rest of winter (except cyclamen).



Update Your Garden Journal

- Keeping a garden journal is a great way to organize and keep track of the how, when, where, and what of gardening as reminders for next season.
- It's easier to take notes during the current garden season than struggling to remember 6 months after the season has ended.
- Garden journals assist in keeping track of problems so preventative action can be taken in future seasons.
- Developing a journal should be fun. It will allow you to be creative while providing a permanent garden record

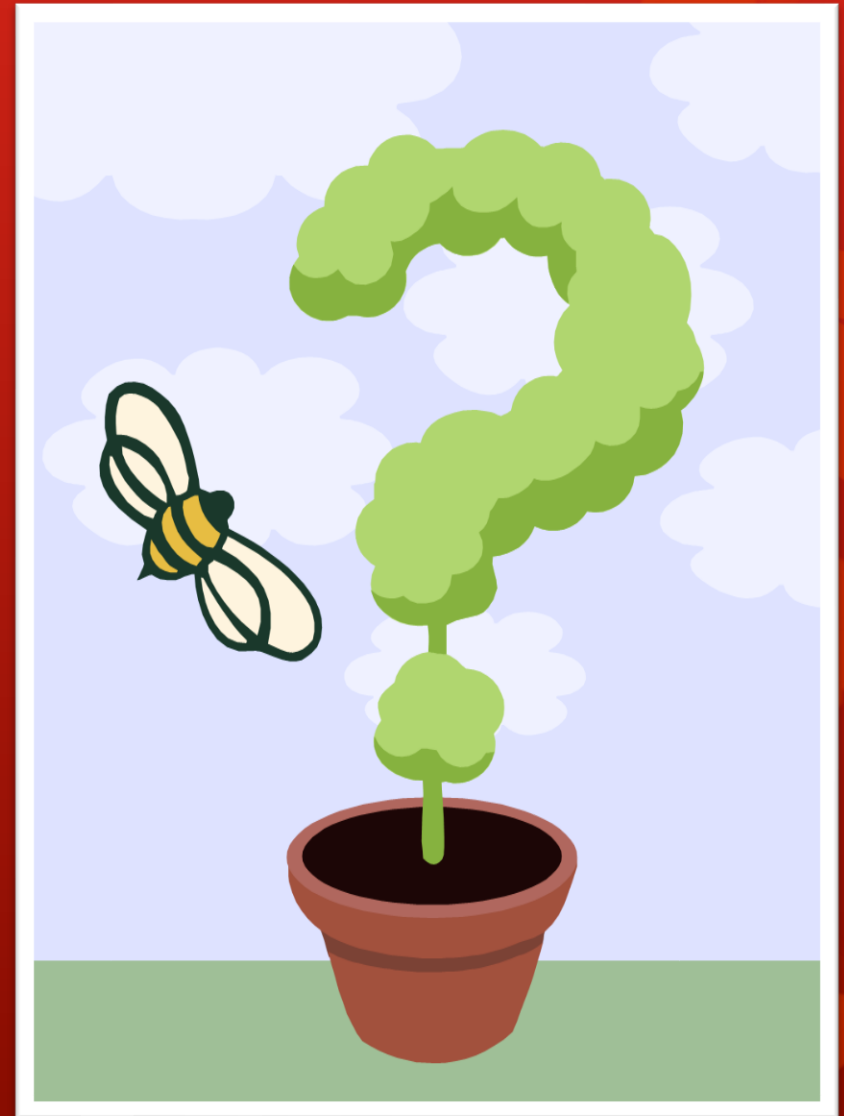


In Conclusion...

- With just a little effort in the late fall and winter, you can have a big impact on the health of your garden next spring and summer.
- So use the remaining days of this year to prepare your garden for a beautiful and healthy coming year.



Questions?



Have More Questions? Need Help?

Contact us at waltonmg@uga.edu
770-267-1324



Walton County Extension
1258 Criswell Rd, SE
Monroe, GA 30655

Office hours: **Monday - Friday**
8:00 am-Noon & 1:00-5:00 pm

MG Help Desk hours:
Tuesdays 1:00-4:00



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Walton County Master Gardeners invite you to

Free Fall 2024 Gardening Talks

Mondays 2:00–3:00 p.m.

O’Kelly Memorial Library

363 Conyers Road, Loganville GA

Sept 9: Exploring Succulents

**Sept 16: Putting the Garden to Bed
for the Winter**

Sept 23: Fall is the Best Time to Plant!

**Sept 30: Hügelkultur—An Ancient
Way to Garden**

Oct 7: Powerhouse Sun Perennials



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Walton County Master Gardeners invite you to
Free Fall 2024 Gardening Talks

Tuesdays 4:00–5:00 p.m.

**W.H. Stanton Memorial Library
407 W. Hightower Trail, Social Circle GA**

Sept 10: Exploring Succulents

**Sept 17: Putting the Garden to Bed
for the Winter**

Sept 24: Fall is the Best Time to Plant!

**Oct 1: Hügelkultur—An Ancient
Way to Garden**

Oct 8: Powerhouse Sun Perennials



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Walton County Master Gardeners invite you to
Free Fall 2024 Gardening Talks

Wednesdays 2:00–3:00 p.m.

New UGA Extension Office

1258 Criswell Rd SE, Monroe GA

Sept 11: Exploring Succulents

**Sept 18: Putting the Garden to Bed
for the Winter**

Sept 25: Fall is the Best Time to Plant!

**Oct 2: Hügelkultur—An Ancient
Way to Garden**

Oct 9: Powerhouse Sun Perennials



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Don't forget to fill out the evaluation!

Let us know what classes you would like to attend in the Spring of 2025.