

What are some steps I can take to put my garden to bed in the fall?

More work now when it is warm, less work in the spring when it is cold.



The following steps will help you save plants from frost damage, save time and labour in the spring.

What do I do in a flower garden?

1. **MULCH** all flower beds with materials such as leaves, arborist chips, aged bark mulch and compost after weeding and cleaning the beds.

Why?

...because mulch is magic. It

- protects soil from moisture loss (and compaction by winter rain)
- protects plants and some underground tubers from freezing
- suppresses weeds
- enriches the soil with organic matter.



Mulched with arborist chips & leaves.

2. **PRUNE**...back shrub branches to maintain general plant health, e.g., remove diseased, damaged, dead or overly long branches from mid-October to late November. Only climbing and rambler roses are generally cut back in early winter.
For all shrubs & trees research the best time for pruning (refer to resource 3).



before

after

climbing
rose



Removing long, leggy branches will prevent breakage from winter winds and heavy snowfalls.



Golden Crane
Hydrangea

3. **DIG UP & SAVE** tubers such as dahlia, begonia, and geranium as they will not survive the winter in most gardens in the ground.

Dahlia

- Trim Dahlia blossoms
- Loosen clumps with a pitchfork, leave for one week for eyes to develop
- Dig up tuber clumps
- Wash and divide tubers (each tuber must include one or two eyes for new growth in the spring)
- Store tubers in a i) ventilated container with dry material (e.g., coconut core, vermiculite, wood shavings) and ii) cool dark place that won't freeze (5-7°C)
- Check regularly during the winter for dehydration
- Spritz with water if tubers are shriveling from lack of moisture

Geranium

- Dig up and wash roots
- Hang up to dry in garage OR plant in pots for overwintering. Store in a greenhouse or bring into the house.
- Take cuttings for extra plants in spring

Tuberous Begonia

- Lift before first frost (before end of October)
- Cure for one week by leaving to in a dry location
- Check tubers for rot or disease
- Wash and dry
- Store in a box with dry material (e.g., wood shaving, vermiculite, coconut coir)
- Store in a cool, dry, dark place that won't freeze



NOTE: Fibrous begonias can be brought indoors and treated like a houseplant BUT must be acclimatized. To acclimatize plants brought indoors place them in the coolest part of the house, or bring them into the house for part of the day, until falling temperatures mean it is time to bring them indoors full time.

Some steps to put my garden to bed in the fall... cont.

4. **TRANSPLANT** and move plants to better locations in the garden as this allows the roots to become established over the fall AND **DIG** and pot up plants to donate or share with friends in spring.

What do I do in a vegetable garden?

1. **FINISH HARVESTING**

2. **PREPARE Summer Vegetable Beds for Winter**

- REMOVE diseased plant material (disease-free spent plants can be chopped up and left on the garden as mulch)
- WEED
- COVER beds with a protective layer e.g., leaves, seedless straw, grass clippings, or landscape fabric.

Why?

1. to prevent soil compaction from winter rains
2. to prevent wind borne weeds from getting established
3. to warm the soil in early spring.



seedless straw



woven landscape fabric

remove in the spring



3. **PROTECT Winter Vegetable Beds**

- COVER beds with fabric tents e.g., ReeMay, when night time temperatures approach 0°C.
- ADD a second layer of protection, e.g., plastic, if the temperature drops below -10°C.



4. **PLANT garlic before the ground freezes...mid to late October.**



5. **CLEAN, REPAIR and/or STORE Outdoor Garden Tools and Equipment**

- Clean and sharpen tools
- Lift and store soaker hoses- flexible black type - to extend their life.
- Check fences, raised bed supports, compost bins for needed repairs.
- Bring in Garden Art



6. **REVIEW your garden results from this year to TWEAK your garden plan for next year.**

RESOURCES

PHOTO & Illustration CREDITS: Numbered by resource. All other images/diagrams: CANVA or VIMGA members.
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