



# FALL GARDENING ACTIVITIES

In the garden, the fall season is an important time to wrap things up for winter and plan ahead for next season. A few simple activities outlined below will help you to get a jump start and have a more productive garden next season.

## INVENTORY THIS SEASON'S GARDEN TO HELP PLAN NEXT SEASON'S HARVEST

Before removing the remaining plants to winterize your garden, write down a list of what was grown this past year. Make notes on what did well and what to plant more or less of.

## REMOVE AND STORE GARDEN STAKES, TRELISES, AND TOMATO CAGES

Garden materials such as cages, trellises, and row cover can be used for several years if stored properly. Remove, clean, organize, and store these materials to prolong their life and make them more accessible when needed in the future.

## REMOVE AS MANY WEEDS, ANNUAL PLANTS, AND VEGETABLE DEBRIS AS POSSIBLE

Many weeds will go to seed in the fall so it's important to remove them reduce the amount of weeds in future seasons. Also remove annual plant and vegetable debris such as squash, cucumber, and tomato vines and add them to the compost pile. Chop up large plants and stalks to make it easier for them to break down. Make sure to leave in perennials (such as strawberries, asparagus and rhubarb) and consider keeping Brassica crops (ex. kale and collards) as they will continue to be productive into the fall and can survive a mild winter.

## ADD COMPOST

Adding compost to your soil one or two times a season will contribute to a more health and vigorous garden. A good rule of thumb is to add a 5 gallon bucket of compost for every 4 foot by 8 foot area of garden bed.

## PLANT FALL CROPS

There are a few crops that can be planted in the fall and harvested the following year. Garlic is typically planted in October (for more info see Planting Garlic hand-out.). Spinach and other leafy greens can also be planted in the fall, ideally no later than mid-October. These crops offer a few harvests into the winter and early spring, particularly when mulched lightly with leaves or covering with row cover will give spinach enough protection for an ongoing harvest.

## COLLECT FALL LEAVES

Leaves are a valuable resource for gardens and have many uses. They make excellent mulch for garden beds and are a rich source of carbon for compost piles. Collecting bagged leaves from the neighborhood is a free and simple way to stockpile them for the coming year.

## TOP OFF THE BEDS WITH A 3-5 INCH THICK LAYER OF SHREDDED LEAVES OR STRAW

Weigh down leaves and/or straw with a good watering or sprinkle some compost or soil on top. Shredding leaves with a lawn mower first will help them decompose quicker and help prevent them from blowing around on windy days. In the spring, there will be a dark, rich, moist soil under the top layer of leaves virtually free of weeds and ready to plant. At this point either remove the leaves and put them in your compost pile or turn them into the soil to further decompose and add nutrients. **Note:** *If you decide to turn leaves in, it will take up to 2 months for them to fully decompose.*

## CLEAN AND STORE GARDEN TOOLS

Using a wire brush and water remove dried soil and debris from blades of tools. This is also a great time to sharpen tools using a metal file or a grinding wheel. Coat metal blades and wood handles with linseed oil to prevent rust and extend the life of the tool.

## STORE WATER HOSES AND TURN OFF THE WATER

Draining and storing garden hoses indoors will extend their life. If water is coming from your home be sure to turn off exterior water sources inside your house. Rainbarrel or rain catchment system should be drained to no more than 3/4 full for winter storage to avoid cracking the container in freezing temperatures. After water sources are turned of leave spigets open to avoid cracking.



This Resource Guide is prepared by Keep Growing Detroit for participants in the Garden Resource Program. For more info please contact 313-757-2635, [keepgrowingdetroit@gmail.com](mailto:keepgrowingdetroit@gmail.com) or visit our website at [WWW.DETROITAGRICULTURE.NET](http://WWW.DETROITAGRICULTURE.NET)