



UConn Home & Garden Education Center



November Gardening Tips

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Annuals and Perennials

- Cut [peonies](#) (not the tree variety) down to 3" above the ground, clear away any summer mulch and debris but do not mulch for the winter.
- Cut back perennials that were covered in [powdery mildew](#) during the summer. Cut stalks to the ground and dispose of them.
- Wait to spread winter mulch until after the ground has frozen. Mulching beforehand can delay dormancy and makes a good home for [voles](#).
- Use small stakes or markers where you've planted bulbs or late starting spring plants in the perennial garden to avoid disturbing them when you begin spring soil preparation.
- Cut back most perennials to 3-4 inches, but ornamental grasses can be left to provide winter interest.
- Pull annuals and add them to the compost pile if free of disease. For annuals that self-seed, allow some seed-laden stems to remain in place.
- Once the ground has frozen (but before it snows), mulch fall planted perennials by placing 3 to 5 inches of pine needles, straw, chopped leaves around them.

Education and Events

- Visit the [Osborne Homestead Museum](#) and other local historical sites to view their holiday decorations.
- Contact your local garden club for a list of upcoming programs or sign up for a workshop, lecture, or course at your local garden center or through the [UConn Master Gardener Program](#).

Houseplants

- Purchase some paperwhite bulbs and follow the directions for [forcing bulbs](#) so that they bloom for the holiday season.
- Avoid chilling houseplants by moving them away from windows as nights get colder.
- Give houseplants as much light as possible as shorter fall days begin.

In the Vegetable Garden

- Mulch [garlic beds](#) with 3-6 inches of straw or pine needles to avoid frost heaving.
- Trim existing [asparagus](#) foliage to the ground after the first hard frost and mulch beds.
- Be sure not to store apples or pears with vegetables. The fruits give off ethylene gas which speeds up the breakdown of vegetables and will cause them to develop a strange taste.
- Avoid the spring rush and get your soil tested for next year's garden before the ground freezes. Information can be found at the [UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory](#).

Insects

- [Asian lady beetles](#) and [Brown marmorated stink bugs](#) may enter the home to overwinter. Use weather stripping or caulking to keep them out.

Landscape and Lawns

Fruits

- Protect young trees from [sunscald](#), a damaging form of sunburn caused by the low winter sun. Cover the trunks with tree wrap, do not apply paint.
- Put up rodent guards on fruit trees to protect them during winter.

- Rake and dispose of apple and cherry leaves. Good sanitation practices reduce re-infestation of insects and diseases the following season.
- After the ground freezes, mulch small fruit plants such as strawberries. One inch of straw or leaves is ideal for strawberries. Small branches may be used to keep mulch in place.
- Remove any mummified remaining fruits from trees, rake up and dispose of old leaves.

Lawns

- Be persistent in collecting leaves that fall late as it will make cleanup in the spring much easier.
- Continue to thoroughly water trees, shrubs, lawn areas and planting beds during dry spells until the soil freezes.
- Keep mowing your lawn as long as the grass is growing.

Trees and Shrubs

- Rose foliage can harbor insects and disease. Pull off remaining leaves and rake up those that have fallen.
- Protect your roses during the cold winter months. Place bark mulch around the base so that the first part of the stem (nearest the ground) is completely covered or mound with soil and protect with a purchased rose cone once the soil freezes.
- Protect grafted roses from winter damage by mounding 10-12" of soil around the base once the ground has frozen.
- Protect young trees from [sunscald](#), a damaging form of sunburn caused by the low winter sun and fluctuating temperatures. Cover the trunks with tree wrap.
- Rake and compost large leaves from oak and maple trees.
- Smaller leaves from ash, honey locust, and birch trees may be chopped with a mulching mower when dry and left on your lawn.
- Continue to thoroughly water trees, shrubs, planting beds, lawn areas and recently planted evergreens until a hard frost. Plants should go into the winter well-watered.
- If a thaw occurs, apply anti-desiccant sprays to broad-leaved evergreens. Anti-desiccants are best sprayed if the temperature reaches 40 degrees and no precipitation is forecasted for a few days. Spray both the tops and the undersides of the leaves.

Wildlife

- Bring out the bird feeders and stock them with bird seed and suet for the birds.
- Clean bird baths and consider a heating unit to provide fresh water throughout the winter.
- Consider providing sunflower hearts instead of whole seeds. It will provide a better source of calories for the birds and eliminates hull waste beneath the feeder.
- Keep mowing your lawn as long as the grass is growing. [Meadow voles and field mice](#) will damage turf and nearby trees and shrubs if they have long grass for food and cover.

Yard Accessories and Miscellaneous

- Pull stakes and plant supports. Clean them with a 10% bleach solution before storing for the winter.
- It is not a good idea to leave fuel in the lawn mower or other gas-powered tools over winter. If there is some gasoline left, run the mower until it is used up.
- Remove mower blades to be sharpened for the next season.
- Be sure to drain hoses and sprayers before cold weather sets in.
- Clean and fix all hand tools. Repaint handles or identification marks that have faded over the summer. Sharpen all blades and remove any rust.
- Keep water gardens covered with a net until gusty fall winds have settled down and leaves aren't blowing around.
- Clay and ceramic pots can crack over the winter if they fill with rain or melted snow that subsequently freezes and expands. Empty pots and place upside down under a tarp or store them in a shed or the garage.

Despite good cultural practices, pests and diseases at times may appear. Chemical control should be used only after all other methods have failed.

For pesticide information please call UConn Home and Garden Education Center weekdays, in Connecticut call toll free 877-486-6271. Out of state call 860-486-6271

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