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YARD 'N' GARDEN



EXTENSION
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GETTING THE GARDEN READY FOR WINTER

Unless perennial foliage is infected with insects or disease, leave it to protect the plants during winter. The standing foliage helps catch leaves and snow. You can remove the foliage if you'd like, but the plants should be protected with a loose mulch. Remove infected foliage from plants and destroy it by burning, then mulch the plants.

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A loose, weed-free mulch helps insure against winter damage to newly planted bulbs and perennials. Leave the mulch in place until the plants begin to emerge from the soil. This holds the plants back and minimizes the likelihood of damage from late spring freezes.

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Mice can cause severe damage to landscape planting in shrub borders, perennials and bulbs. Placing poison mice baits in the garden helps reduce mice injury. Be certain the poison bait is placed so pets and birds won't get it.

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Remove the tops of annual flowers. Well rotted manure helps increase the organic matter content of the soil. Add manure before spading at the rate of 3-4 bushels per 100 square feet. Spade the soil deeply and leave it rough over winter. Leaving soil rough over winter helps improve the soil structure and kills exposed perennial weeds such as quack. Soil also dries out earlier in the spring.

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Most perennials and evergreens will winter better if the soil is moist before winter begins. If fall rains aren't adequate, the garden should be watered thoroughly before it freezes.

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Smooth barked trees such as maples and mountain ash should have their bark protected to prevent sunscald injury. Wrap their trunks in the fall to prevent this injury which occurs in late winter. Burlap strips, aluminum foil, and commercially prepared tree wraps can be used. Remove wraps the following spring.

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