

NEWS COLUMN

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Fall Chores Prior to Winter

Check Outside Storage Areas

Make sure to remove insecticides, paints, herbicide and other chemicals from your garage or outside storage shed before they freeze and are ruined. When moving them however, keep safety and security in mind. All pesticides need to be stored in a leak proof container out of the reach of children. Many of these substances are flammable, so they must be kept away from furnace rooms and hot water heaters. The best way to reduce storage of these types of products is to buy only what you will utilize in a single season.

Clean Up Old Residue

Sanitation, sanitation, sanitation are the three main keys to managing and reducing disease risk in your garden. It is very important to remove the leaves and other plant debris from your garden spot this fall especially if there were any disease problems this growing season. Many foliar diseases overwinter on plant tissue from this season reinfesting your garden next year with the same diseases.

If you don't remove the debris, plowing it under will work. However, rototilling the garden will only bury some of the debris and leave much of it at or near the soil surface, where it can cause problems for next year.

An active compost pile will "cook" the disease organisms-if your compost pile reaches 110-120° F temperature, frequently turn your pile and keep it adequately ventilated.

Drain & Properly Store Hoses

Drain the water out of the hose and store on specially designed supports or reels or coil loosely to prevent damage. Sags and kinks can weaken the hose wall. Storing indoors will extend the life of the hose.

Winterize Sprayers

Most pesticide manufacturers recommend triple rinsing. This includes all parts of the sprayer from holding tank to nozzles. Oil moving parts following direction provided for your particular sprayer. Tip the sprayer upside down or hang it upside down when not in use.