

Late season care for your garden

Written by Melinda Myers, gardening expert, TV & radio host, author and columnist
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Six things to do now for a better garden next year

As the summer garden season nears an end, don't let your guard down. Keeping up with a few basic chores can improve your landscape's beauty and reduce your workload next season.

Continue weeding. Removing weeds now before they go to seed will eliminate hundreds of weeds next season. Destroy invasive weeds, those that have gone to seed and perennials that may root in the compost pile. And mulch the soil if you haven't already done so.

Keep watering new plantings, stressed and young plants, evergreens, and moisture loving plants as needed throughout the fall. Water thoroughly and whenever the top few inches are crumbly and slightly moist. Check my plant guide for more specifics on your plants watering needs. Properly watered plants are better able to survive the rigors of winter.

Reduce future workloads and improve your garden's health and beauty. A layer of shredded leaves, evergreen needles or woodchips will help suppress weeds, conserve moisture, moderate soil temperatures, and improve the soil as they decompose.

Replace faded annuals with cool season annuals, mums, and other fall plants, decorative squash and pumpkins. And add a few fall containers to your front entrance, patio or deck. It adds color and a feeling of freshness to the garden.

Monitor and manage pests as needed. Keeping plants healthy throughout the growing season increases your overwintering success. Hand pick small populations of insects, rake and destroy disease infested leaves, and always use the most eco-friendly products when greater intervention is needed.

Keep applying animal repellents. Use a long lasting all natural product like Bobbex. Keeping hungry animals away from your landscape will help reduce the future risk of critters moving in and dining on your landscape.

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