

Fall grounds care

Revel in foresight or despair in hindsight

Lush lawns, sturdy shrubs and freely flowering plants get their growing good looks next spring from the gardener's careful attentions this autumn. More than at any other season, your garden-scape deserves the attention of its annual fall sprucing-up to preserve it throughout the unpredictable ravages of the winter ahead, as well as preparing it for the first growth and bloom of spring.

Now is the time to mulch, feed, water and rake. If the crisp cool air and crunch of leaves are insufficient to lure you to the autumnal outdoors. Consider the prospective pleasures of a cleaner and healthier garden than ever, green and blooming with the first crocus and daffodils next Spring.

Start your fall gardening plan with the basics underfoot. Now is the ideal time to seed and feed your lawn to thicken-up sparse areas, fill in bald spots and generally do your best to get the green carpet in shape.

Begin by thoroughly raking your lawn to clean up leaves, clippings and thatch. If the grass seems especially matted, and/or messy, consider renting a power rake from your garden center to help you do a thorough job. After raking, level off any low spots that may collect water or prove

hazardous underfoot. Simply cut and root back and sod, add soil to make the ground level, then replace the sod.

NOW YOUR LAWN is ready for a layer of seedstarting fertilizer and then grass seed. You'll get the best, most even results by using a seed spreader. Broadcast spreading by hand inevitably leads to a crazy-quilt look of lush and sparse grass. Many lawn and garden centers offer the free use of a spreader when you purchase seed or fertilizer from them. Study seed and fertilizer packages carefully. Buying the best quality and correct products for your needs almost always pays off with the best results for all of your labors. Since autumn is such a dry season, continue to lightly water your newly seeded lawn daily until the new grass is 2 inches tall. Enjoy your results in almost instant rewards but don't be surprised if you see green and healthy new growth in just a few days.

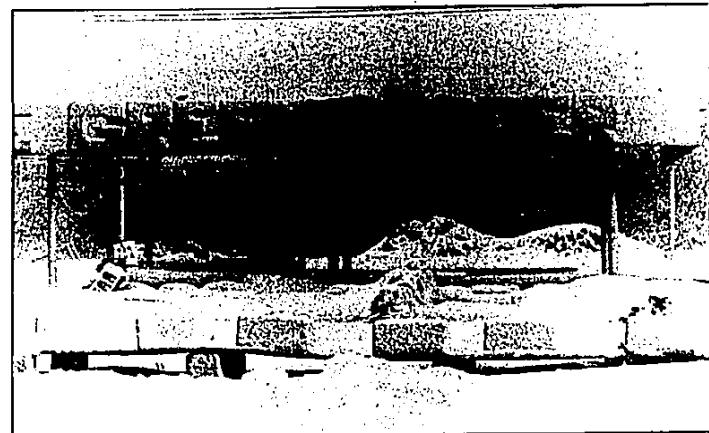
Once you have your lawn in shape, consider the plantings around it. Autumn is a great time to spruce up your landscape with new shrubs and trees, and, of course, to give existing plants some tender loving care before the onslaught of winter weather. Begin with any new plantings you had

been considering this summer as you spent more time outside. This is the time to add a tree to shade your patio, a low hedge to camouflage your neighbor's garbage cans, perhaps even a screen of bushes to provide privacy or a windbreak.

Research any proposed new plantings

carefully. When choosing bushes and trees, consider their eventual size, hardiness and upkeep and decide between deciduous or evergreen varieties.

DECIDUOUS SHRUBS are generally faster growing and ideal for summer pri-



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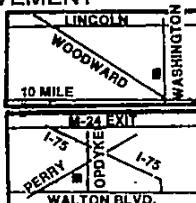
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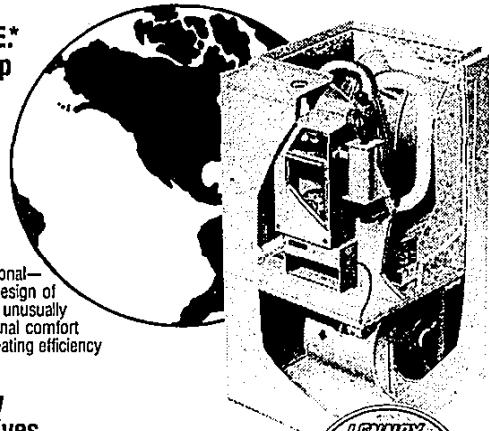
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