

Gardeners' Fall Chores Important

In late summer, cooler weather gives gardeners relief from the heat of summer.

You'll notice plants perking up with greener foliage and more blossoms. Late summer and early fall are prime times for building better lawns.

Grasses prefer cool weather generally. Lawns have more vigorous growth in spring and fall when temperatures are moderate.

Most lawns suffer during the summer months.

Disease, drought, weeds, erosion, compaction and just plain wear, all take their toll.

Autumn Perfect Time for Seeding

One of the many reasons for starting lawns in autumn is the excellent sprouting, lawn seed generally enjoys them. So long as the cheapest lawn blend on the shelf is not sought out, chances are a purchaser will get seed of quality lineage, almost 100 per cent sproutable.

It is the magic of autumn weather that transforms this good seed into lush green shoots, just at the season when their "chances in life" are best.

If you test lawn seed in a germinator, where humidity is constant and the sprouting temperature ideal—something the equivalent of 60-degree nights and 80-degree days—good bluegrass shows tiny shoots in less than a week.

Fine fescues, the other basic component of quality seed blends, produce husky sprouts even more quickly.

Outdoors, the environment might not be quite so ideal as in a germinator.

But if you water frequently and mulch, so that the soil surface never dries out completely, autumn temperatures create a

situation similar to that found ideal in the seed germinator.

Within two weeks there should be a fuzz of green from lawn seedlings made in August or early September.

Of course once the seed has sprouted, it takes more than just water. Most soils benefit greatly from the mixing of fertilizer at the time the seed-bed is prepared.

If you failed to fertilize then, or if you merely upgraded an old lawn with top-dress seed, later feeding with a lawn-type fertilizer is certainly advisable before winter really sets in. But don't fertilize young grass until it is old enough to have mowed; new sprouts are tender, and burn more easily than does established grass.

Fescues Excellent In Blends

Even fine fescues, notably drought-resistant, suffered in some eastern locations this year, so prolonged was the dry weather. Lawns that have thinned through summer should receive bolstering immediately.

Autumn is the best time to thicken the turf, get grass started where weeds would otherwise prevail.

Kentucky bluegrass blends containing some fine fescue in varieties such as Chewings or Pennlawns, serve the all-purpose needs of most lawns. Kentucky bluegrass varieties weave a soft second to none, while the fine fescues perform ably in the shade and on drier, poorer soils.

The fine fescues are also an excellent "nursegrass," in the sense of sprouting quickly.

In most cases a thin lawn need not be reseeded. If the grass is just scanty, scattering a good seed mixture at half-rate, plus lawn fertilizer once or twice through autumn, should suffice to build a thick, weed-resistant turf.

If there are sizable bare patches, seeding the soil surface will be worth the effort, so that lawn seed settles into the soil for better rooting. On smaller lawns a sharp-lined rake or cultivating fork suffices.

For larger properties the garden tractor may have a disk or heavy attachment, or powered "vertical mowers" that slice lightly into the soil and can be rented through many equipment and garden outlets.

Chief precaution is to sow good quality seed, consisting mostly of "fine-textured" kinds (they are now grouped on the label). You won't want to thicken a lawn so important to your landscaping with coarse bunchgrasses.

used for extensive weed problems. Use 2-4-D or 2,4,5-T for broadleaved weeds.

Read and heed the labels. Crabgrass is an annual and will die with the first real frost. But the dead weeds do give the grass a better chance to recover. Plan now to apply Dacthal to stop crabgrass in the spring.

Spray about lilac-blooming time.

Now apply fertilizer and lime to give the grass a lift so that it will have an opportunity to harden off before the ground freezes.

Apply 5-6 pounds of a 10-4-4, 10-5 or 8-4-4 turf fertilizer per 1,000 square feet.

Apply 50 pounds of ground limestone per 1,000 square feet if none was applied last spring.

Your local garden supplier can advise you on soil testing for the most accurate fertilizer to use on your ground.

To give a complete carpet of grass for your home grounds, roll firm and water well each day until seedlings are well established in the old bare spots.

Time to Move House Plants

House plants that have enjoyed a summer vacation outdoors should be moved indoors in early autumn, at least several weeks before artificial heat is turned on in homes.

This will enable plants to adapt themselves to the indoor climate without being hindered in their adjustment by the hot, dry air of heated homes.

Plants thrive in warm, moist weather, such as that outdoors in summer. If they are not moved indoors until late fall, when the weather turns cold and homes are artificially heated, the abrupt change in their mode of living most likely will harm them.

Plants that haven't thrived outdoors during the lush days of summer are not likely to improve indoors.

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Dry Summers Fall Hard on Perennials

Summer and early autumn have been extremely dry. Keep watering until the ground freezes to help your perennials and deep-rooted plants through the winter if there has been little rain in your area.

Take stock of the situation before heavy frost seals the soil and if the water reserve seems to be deficient, a thorough soaking is in order.

Your broadleaf and other evergreens especially will welcome a long, but gentle, drink.

Mulches will help your plants through the severe winter but do not apply the covering around the plants until after cold weather has arrived.

Hyacinths Add Pleasant Odor To Your Garden

Many gardeners do not know that the hyacinth can be brilliantly-hued, pastel or pure white.

This sweet-smelling flowering bulb blooms over a many-week period each spring, charming all who are lucky to be close enough for a whiff of its heady perfume.

The Dutch hyacinth is gradually becoming known for its versatility in this country.

Formerly, the crisp flower with its tiny florets and perfect although, was planted in geometrically-patterned, formal beds in an effect of haughty elegance.

Now the cheerful hyacinth is equally at home in contemporary gardens where it can be planted singly or in groups among evergreens or flowering shrubs.

Gradual cooling in the fall winterizes a plant. The water content is diminished and the more concentrated sap is better able to stand the cold.

Sudden cold will freeze excess

water in a young plant's tissues and break the cells.

Evaporation of moisture in evergreens also is a cause of trouble.

There are excellent sprays available at your garden which, if applied when the temperature is above freezing, will provide protection.

If the leaves of your trees seemed to drop off prematurely this fall, it could be due to the drought. Give the tree a good drink before severe cold sets in.

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