

Did You Winterize Your Lawn?

Winter this year came early and with a blast! The blizzard shocked us—and our lawns. Bitter cold temps then quickly followed, putting an abrupt end to the growing season. Our lawns have stopped growing, but there are a few activities we need to take care of before the long, frigid winter sets in.

Mulching and Raking Leaves.

The leaves of some trees are still dropping. We can manage fallen leaves by shredding them with a mulching mower. It's quick and easy. There is no need to rake shredded leaves in the lawn if you can see the grass blades after mowing.

This strategy won't work with thick layers of leaves, which we often find beneath large trees. In these cases, we need to rake the leaves or they will suffocate the lawn and create diseases.

Mowing. Our lawns have stopped growing. Make sure your lawn has been mowed before a blanket of snow covers it. A tall, lush turf is not desirable during winter. A tall turf gets matted down by snow and becomes susceptible to diseases. Tall grass blades will attract voles that rip our lawns and eat the bark off our trees and shrubs—sometimes killing the plants.

Fertilizing. Fertilizing the lawn this late in fall is not recommended. Our lawns are nearly dormant and will absorb very little of the nutrients this late in the season. Any fertilizer that remains on frozen ground is at risk of



running off the land. Let's wait to fertilize in spring. In most cases, the next best time to fertilize will be around Memorial Day.

Killing Weeds. It's too late for effective control. Weeds should be sprayed while they are actively growing. Mid- to late September was the most effective time to control weeds. Let's wait at least until weeds start growing in spring.

Sowing Seed. The best time to sow grass seed was in early fall (August 15–September 20). We missed that opportunity.

You can still “dormant seed” your lawn in November. Scratch the soil and sow the seed. The seed will stay dormant through winter and then

germinate in spring. Dormant seeding works best in level sites where soil will not wash away during the spring thaw.

If you dormant seed, do not use a crabgrass preventer next spring. The crabgrass herbicide will kill all germinating grass seedlings, including your desirable lawn grass seedlings.

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Landscaping to Attract Birds

Do you feed birds during winter? If not, give it a try! It's a joy to watch their lively movements, especially in winter when our landscapes are bleak.

Let's talk about giving birds a *home*, and not just a *meal*. We do this through landscaping. The following are some of the best trees and shrubs for birds in North Dakota landscapes.



Mountainash

Waxwings and robins can't resist the berries in fall. Mountainash trees grow best in cool soil; spread bark mulch under the tree to help with this.



Juniper

Juniper berries are an excellent source of food in winter. Evergreens, in general, provide excellent nesting cover and winter shelter—essential in our frigid climate! Spruce, pine and fir are other useful evergreens.



American Cranberrybush

The bright red fruits persist on this tall shrub all winter. Birds value these berries in late winter when other sources of food in nature are scarce.



Dogwood

Birds gobble dogwood berries in fall. The branches of redosier, pagoda, silky and gray dogwoods are attractive and provide good nesting cover.



Serviceberry

Related to Juneberry, you will be tempted to harvest the delicious fruits before the birds find them. Other shrubs that feed birds in summer and provide good nesting sites include buffaloberry, raspberry and elderberry.



Hawthorn

An exceptional small tree. Its colorful fruits nourish birds through late fall and winter. The thorny branches provide a cat-proof, protective site for nesting.



Hackberry

Bird-friendly landscapes offer multiple layers (high, medium, low) of plants for nesting. This tall tree tolerates alkaline soil. Birds eat hackberries during winter.

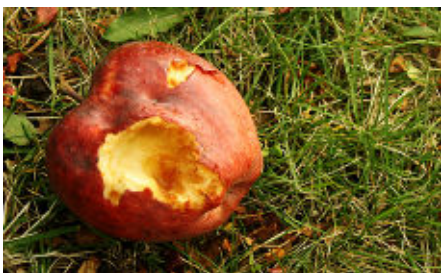
Plant Health Care

Herbs, Vegetables and Fruits



Grow Herbs Indoors

Now is a great time to sow herbs. You can enjoy fresh herbs in your holiday meals or grow pots of herbs to share as holiday gifts. Basil, dill, parsley and cilantro are easily grown. Use potting soil. Set pots near a sunny window or use electric lights. Room temps work well.



Clean Under Fruit Trees

Rake and remove fallen leaves and fruits. This litter can be a source of diseases and insect pests next year. Look out for wasps when picking up fruits.



Frosted Beets and Carrots

Root vegetables can tolerate frost, but harvest and store the crop before the ground freezes. Trim off the leaves and store under cool, humid conditions.



Mulch Strawberry Beds

Apply 4–6 inches of straw *after* the ground freezes. Straw insulates plants from extreme temps, prevents premature sprouting, and keeps the soil stable during freezing/thawing cycles. Mulching too early can attract rodents.



Heat Induced Necrosis

Dry soil in the north created brown spots in shallow tubers. Next year, keep tubers cool by regularly hilling, fertilize to promote shady vines, and reduce spacing in rows. Irrigate when needed.



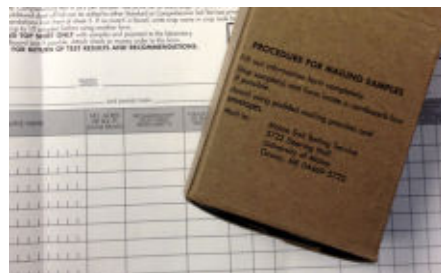
Recycle Jack-O'-Lanterns

Smash your pumpkin and put it in your compost pile, or break it down into one-inch pieces and work it into your garden soil.



Apple Blossoms?

Apples and crabapple trees are now loaded with flower buds. Spring-like daylengths and temperatures can fool some of these buds into blooming. Usually less than 1% of buds are affected and there is no need to worry.



Take a Soil Test

A soil test can lead to healthier plants and higher yields. You will learn nutrient levels, acidity, salinity and organic matter levels. For more info and forms, Google “NDSU Soil Testing Lab.”

Plant Health Care

Trees and Shrubs



Protect Trees Against Deer

Physical barriers (fences) are most effective, but often impractical. Repellents that induce fear in deer and generate a sulfurous odor are effective. This includes products containing decaying animal proteins such as eggs or slaughterhouse waste. Deer readily sense this odor and may fear a predator is nearby. Such products include Deer Away, Liquid Fence and Plantskydd. Repellents that cause pain, such as hot pepper sprays, are effective at maximum rates. Spray repellents directly on plants.



Irrigate Evergreens?

We like to fill evergreen needles with water to protect them from winter burn (*shovn*). Soils across the state are saturated and no irrigation is needed this fall.



Brush Off Snow

The weight of ice and heavy snow can break branches. Willows, birch and arborvitae are especially sensitive. At this time of year, snow usually melts quickly. Leave it to melt or carefully use a broom and gently sweep off the snow, using an *upward* motion.



Falling Twigs

Shade trees may drop branch tips in fall. Tips have smooth, rounded edges. This self-pruning, called *cladoptosis*, may be caused by stress or the shedding of weak branches. No treatment is needed.



Avoid Buckthorn Berries

Buckthorn is a weedy shrub that spreads easily by birds eating the berries and pooping out seeds. Buckthorn berries are mildly toxic to people, causing stomach cramps and diarrhea. To kill the shrub, cut it at the base and soak the wound with triclopyr or glyphosate.

Flowers



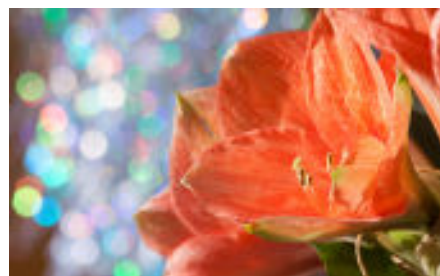
Plant Tulips Outdoors

Bulbs are on sale. It sounds crazy, but you can plant until the ground is frozen solid. The flower bud is already inside the bulb. Irrigate and mulch.



Grow Bulbs In Pots

Set bulbs close to, but not touching each other in the pot. Cover with soil so bulb tips are at surface. Water. Place in unheated garage (32–50°F). Bulbs will sprout within 3 months. Move to sunny spot and enjoy the spring color indoors!



Start Your Amaryllis

Amaryllis started now will bloom over the Christmas holidays. Treat yourself to a giant bulb from a garden center or order online. Big bulbs will produce more flowers and are more likely to bloom in future years.

Weather Almanac for October 2019

Site	FIRST FROST ^{1,2}		TEMPERATURE ²				RAINFALL ^{2,4}				GROWING DEGREE DAYS ^{2,5}			
	(28°F)		October				October		2019		October		2019	
	2019	Norm	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	10/10	09/27	36	42	75	7	0.99	1.25	17.99	14.48	51	74	1941	2153
Bowman	10/09	09/30	36	44	77	9	2.25	1.38	17.74	12.68	67	103	1992	2270
Carrington	10/11	10/05	38	44	76	13	1.85	1.77	22.21	17.08	42	98	2029	2340
Crosby	10/03	09/29	36	41	68	11	0.32	1.11	18.48	12.65	59	65	1901	1998
Dickinson	10/09	10/03	37	43	75	10	1.29	1.27	20.07	14.16	65	117	2074	2267
Fargo	10/24	10/05	43	46	71	19	3.46	2.15	22.93	18.14	66	96	2426	2489
Grafton	10/24	10/04	39	43	69	16	3.55	1.98	16.37	17.64	37	81	2107	2177
Grand Forks	10/24	10/05	40	43	68	19	3.60	1.97	26.81	17.22	41	76	2090	2219
Hazen	10/09	09/28 ⁶	37	46	77	10	1.12	1.38	22.29	14.41	60	142	2059	2508
Hillsboro	10/23	10/06	41	45	70	15	3.54	2.17	25.47	17.85	52	81	2185	2340
Jamestown	10/11	10/04	37	44	72	14	2.77	1.69	22.96	16.64	39	80	1998	2298
Langdon	10/10	09/28	36	40	72	13	0.99	1.49	16.39	16.68	30	43	1785	1830
Mandan	10/10	10/01	38	44	77	10	2.27	1.37	21.29	15.44	57	102	2137	2336
Minot	10/09	10/07	37	43	76	13	1.15	1.41	18.63	14.72	50	65	1993	2099
Mott	10/03	09/28	36	44	78	9	1.83	1.28	22.60	13.39	66	125	2047	2371
Rugby	10/11	10/04	37	42	76	12	0.85	1.18	14.02	16.10	44	80	1994	2155
Wahpeton	10/14	10/04 ⁷	41	47	71	16	2.73	2.39	23.61	19.14	66	106	2321	2608
Watford City	10/09	09/25	38	43	75	12	0.49	1.03	16.60	12.09	68	101	2098	2260
Williston	10/09	09/29	38	46	74	10	0.63	0.97	20.01	12.00	69	134	2120	2571
Wishek	10/10	09/27	36	44	71	9	2.91	1.61	24.55	14.33	42	82	1939	2122

DAYLENGTH (Nov 1, McClusky, center of ND)³ LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS¹

Sunrise: 8:24 AM Daylength: 10h 2m Nov 6–10: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal
 Sunset: 6:26 PM Change since Oct 1: -1h 42m Nov 8–14: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

^{1,2,3} Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com

⁴ Measurements begin April 1.

⁵ GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F, respectively.

^{6,7} Frost data for Beulah and Campbell, respectively.

Credits

Source: Craven, S.R. and R. Ellarson. 1994. Landscape plants that attract birds. Publ. G1609. University of Wisconsin.

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