



## Checklist for November Gardeners

By Dawn Pettinelli, UConn Home & Garden Education Center

The days remaining to finish up this year's garden chores are dwindling. Much of what is accomplished now will save you time and trouble when the next growing season begins. That last patch of mild weather has been great for getting those last few tasks accomplished but cold weather is now setting in.

Finish cleaning up the vegetable, annual and perennial beds when you get a chance. Spent plants can be composted if not disease ridden. Remove any persistent weeds. Have your soil's pH checked and add limestone, if necessary. The turnaround time at the UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab ([www.soiltesting.canhr.uconn.edu](http://www.soiltesting.canhr.uconn.edu)) is pretty quick this time of year. The freezing and thawing over winter will help work the limestone into the soil. Compost and manure can be added to the garden and tilled in if needed to increase nutrients and organic matter. Use low nutrient sources of organic matter like peat moss or leaf compost if your soil nutrient levels are already elevated. A great covering for the vegetable garden beds is the mix of lawn clippings and leaves picked up by a mower.



If you have had trouble in the vegetable garden with cucumber beetles, flea beetles and European corn borers, be scrupulous in your garden cleanup as they will overwinter in debris. Yellowed asparagus stalks can be cut to the ground. Collect and clean your garden stakes for reuse next year.

Store leftover garden chemicals and fertilizers in a dry, dark place where temperature will not fall below freezing. Don't leave them in unheated sheds. Check spray equipment for leftover pesticides and empty, dry out and store for the winter. Remove caked soil from garden tools and oil lightly to prevent rust.

If you are planning a new bed for the spring, you can start digging it now, weather permitting. Turn your compost one last time or two before winter. It has been a fairly wet fall so most likely you will not need to add any water to it unless under cover. Keep a pile or bin of fall leaves to mix in to kitchen wastes over the winter.

Pick up any fallen apples or other fruits and add to the compost pile. Apple scab can be controlled to some extent by sanitation. Rake up and discard fallen diseased leaves from apple and crabapple trees.

You may want to install hardware cloth cylinders around fruit trees to discourage mice and rabbits from nibbling at the bark. Set them an inch or so below ground and high enough so rabbits cannot reach over them with snow on the ground.

Lawns may need one last mowing depending on the weather. Low cut lawns are less likely to be infected with snow mold and also provide less cover to voles. As with the vegetable garden, limestone can still be added if the pH is low. A general maintenance application of 50 pounds per 1000 square feet is usually needed every year or so.

Resist the urge to winterize roses, perennials and strawberries until the ground freezes, probably after Thanksgiving this year. Purchase antidesiccants to spray on broad leaved evergreens like rhododendrons, hollies and boxwoods that are most susceptible to winter damage. Again, wait until later in November or even December for consistently low temperatures to apply them.

If you are planning to purchase a live Christmas tree, dig a hole for it now. Cover the soil with mulch or bring buckets of soil indoors so it will not be frozen when you want to plant.

Check your houseplants for insects that you may not have noticed earlier. Remember with the reduced light levels and temperatures, houseplants will require less fertilizer and probably water than when the weather was warmer, and the plants were actively growing.

Take down and clean your bird houses and start filling your feeders. Many birds overwinter in New England, and they will appreciate the food offered and in return, will keep you company until the return of the spring.

If you have questions on doing any of these garden chores or other home and garden topics, feel free to call the UConn Home & Garden Education Center, toll-free, at 877.486.6271, visit their web site at [www.homegarden.cahnr.uconn.edu](http://www.homegarden.cahnr.uconn.edu) or contact your local Cooperative Extension Center.