



November Tips

LAWNS and LANDSCAPING

by Diane Relf, Extension Specialist, Environmental Horticulture

- Take a walk through your garden as the fall season winds down. Take time to reflect on the successes and failures of your gardens this year. Make notes in your gardening notebook for new things to try, and things to fix, next spring.
- The average family's needs and activities change in cycles of six to seven years. The smaller the property, the greater the landscape-planning challenge. Design outdoor areas and facilities to be modified easily with your changing needs.
- Add pine needle mulch to the rock garden to reduce erosion, conserve soil moisture, provide humus, and protect plants from heaving out of the ground by alternate freezing and thawing during winter.
- Mulch used in spring and summer to control weed growth is different from the mulch used in winter. Winter mulch to protect perennial plants should not be dense and heavy. Put down shredded tree branches, pine boughs, or small leaves when the ground freezes in your region. In spring, rake away the mulch material and add it to the compost pile.
- When placing plants around the home, remember as a general rule, plants with thick leaves can take lower light levels than those with thin leaves.
- If needed, apply dolomitic limestone to the lawn so that fall rain and winter snow can wash it into the soil. Your soil pH test will give guidelines for the amount needed.
- A November application of fertilizer is very beneficial to a lawn of cool-season grasses. It promotes root development without excessive top growth. With a strong root system, your lawn will be better able to withstand drought conditions next summer.
- Small low spots in the lawn can be raised by carefully removing the turf and filling in the low spot with good topsoil. Remove the turf by cutting 2 inches deep into the lawn with a flat-bladed spade, then angle the blade under the sod to cut it free, keeping at least 2 inches deep to get most of the roots. After filling the low spot, replace the sod, and keep it well watered until it is reestablished.

Monthly Tips have been prepared since 1986 by various staff of the Office of Consumer Horticulture including Ellen Bennett, Michelle Buckstrup, Susan Day, Susan DeBolt, Sharon Dendy, Kate Dobbs, Sheri Dom, David Gravell, Virginia Nathan, Jenny Shuster, Ellen Silva, and Ruth Sorenson. Resource material for the development of this information includes the Virginia Master Gardener Handbook; Extension Publications and newsletters from VCE, numerous other states, and the USDA; and an extensive library of over 900 books, magazines and journals. Project funded by The Virginia Gardener Newsletter subscription fees. Diane Relf, Project Director and Content Specialist.

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