

GETTING READY FOR FALL AND WINTER IN THE GARDEN

By Jim Douglas

The following are a set of general recommendations on garden care for Juneau. You may not need all this information, but pick and choose what seems the most helpful to your garden situation.

Lawn Care

1. If lawn is showing reddish color add a half pound of a high nitrogen fertilizer per 100 square feet; if not, wait for fall fertilizer.
2. In October, add a fall or winterizing fertilizer and five pounds of lime per 100 square feet
3. Cut the lawn short once the grass quits growing.
4. Use the lawn mower and bagger to do most, if not all, of your raking – it mulches and rakes at the same time.

Flower Beds

1. Weed all the beds – throw anything with seed heads in the garbage not in the compost
2. Cut down all rotting materials and throw in the compost – unless they look moldy with fungus
3. Use slug bait - SLUGGO and ESCARGO are organic METHALDHYDE bait if in-organic or beer but don't use Alaskan it is just too good for slugs
4. Rake the ground to bare ground
5. Continue to monitor garden and when we get the first hard freeze and cover perennials with spruce boughs or straw. If you are heading out of town before the first freeze – add mulch then.

Fall Planted Bulbs

1. Get good bulbs – some give in the bulb is OK but it shouldn't be mushy
2. Plant at the right depth – with tulips make sure they are 7 to 8 inches. A good sandy soil works out great
3. Be sure to use a bulb booster with a good fungicide
4. Plant in layers placing the tulips about 7 inches, then some at 4 to 6 inches and some at 2 inches
5. Try not to have everything blooming at once

Shrubs and Trees

1. Rake up all the dead leaves to bare ground – most important on lilacs, currants, cottonwoods or anything that had insects or diseases last year.
2. Cut out all dead wood – check for dead by nicking the wood, and if you find green under the bark, the wood is alive; if brown it is dead.
3. Trees and shrubs that can be broken down by heavy snow can be tied up using string or twine. Also, you can prop up big limbs. On a heavy snow day, be sure to shake the tree to get rid of the snow.
4. Water all trees and shrubs before the first heavy frost. Even three or four days with no rain can leave the soil too dry to support the tree on a sunny day in February or March.
5. Protect rhodias and other sensitive plants with a wind barrier in windy areas. Use a few stakes with burlap to make a barrier. Do not allow the burlap to touch the stems or leaves or those parts will freeze to it and die.
6. Some shrubs like, roses and spirea, can be cut down or way back in the winter. This keeps the snow from knocking down the roses and spirea are really ugly in the winter.
7. Remove lichens from the bark – use gloves and just rub the lichens off the bark
8. Fertilize spruce and hemlocks in October (8-32-16 about 10-15 pounds per large tree) – do not fertilize trees that were attacked by spruce needle aphids last year it may make them more yummy. Drive holes 3-4 inches deep around the tree starting a few feet inside the drip line and move out to a few feet beyond the drip line. Pour in one to two inches of fertilizer. On trees without a lawn cover, application to the surface is fine.
9. Thoroughly wash off all cedars, evergreens, and dwarf Alberta spruce trees.
10. Paint the bark of newly planted trees or trees less than three years old – white. The white will reflect the heat so the bark doesn't warm up on cold days and then freeze. You can also use a white tree wrap with good success.
11. If lilacs had brown spots on them this year, it is a small larvae. Next year when you see the brown spots appear treat with acephate.
12. If your trees or shrubs were attacked by aphids this year – next year use soapy water on them or call our office for more toxic treatment advice if soap is not working. Acephate works on non-edible plants as a foliar spray.
13. Mulch around shrubs and trees with compost, seaweed, bark, or other materials – remove in March or April

Vegetables

1. Turn the soil at least twice – cover with clear plastic to keep the rain from washing away fertilizers
2. Before covering with plastic, dig in the compost you made this summer.
3. Continue slug treatment
4. Pull all weeds and materials left in the garden and toss them out – generally not into the compost. If you want to compost, take the lawn mower and run over the materials to break them up before composting
5. Potatoes – dig them – wash them gently – allow to dry (but keep them out of the light – they will turn green) – store them in a cool dry place
6. Carrots - can be left in the garden and protected from freezing with a very heavy mulch, they may be harvested up to Christmas – note this has not worked for the author ever but others have great success
7. Carrots – pull – cut tops – wash – store in damp sawdust or sand in cool area about 38° - try a refrigerator
8. Cabbage – cut the root or twist it off to keep heads from bursting – in cool weather they will hold a week or more before you need to bring inside – next year plant a lot less if you can't eat this year's crop
9. Turnips – store like carrots – turnips in Alaska are heaven, so try them you'll like them
10. Pull out all roots and if any were attacked by root maggots throw them in the garbage not the compost
11. Pull onions – dry and store dry
12. Plant garlic and cover with plastic – harvest next fall

Berries

1. Fertilize strawberries now if you haven't done so before (8-32-16 and 2 pounds per 100 square feet)
2. Cover the strawberries with a mulch of straw or sitka spruce boughs
3. Cut back the canes of raspberries - Cut last year's producers to the ground, cut the second year canes to about 5 feet in height. If you have wires in the patch – tie the raspberries to the wire to protect from snow. In spring fertilizer will work great 8-32-16 at 1.5 to 2.0 pounds per 100 square feet
4. Prune back currants, gooseberries, and other berry bushes to a strong scaffold
5. Pull what is left of the rhubarb and divide large plants now or next spring
6. If your currants were eaten by imported currant worms – rake to bare ground and get ready to treat next year with malathion
7. Cherry and apple trees need to be fertilized in spring

Garden Equipment

1. Clean, sharpen, and oil all shears, pruners, shovels, hoes, rakes etc.
2. Blow out all hoses; coil and store. Get all sprinklers inside, stack 5 gallon buckets out of the rain
3. Take down all garden structures that are non-permanent, wipe with a 10% bleach solution, store
4. Build new beds and make changes in the garden so you are ready for next spring
5. Store all fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, etc. in a cool, dry, and preferably dark place

Zones

1. We have many temperature zones in Juneau; The new Sunset Gardening Book does the best job of describing them
Zone 3 - near the Glacier facing north
Zone 4 - most of the valley and good in almost every part of Juneau
Zone 5 - downtown Juneau and Douglas – all waterfront areas Lena and Fritz Coves, road system to Echo Cove
Zone 6 - south facing areas on the water – Lena Loop and some bays

General Rules of Thumb

1. Cleanliness is next to godliness in the garden
2. All plants will have insects and diseases – what you have to determine is “how bad is it and do I really need to treat it?”
3. One teaspoon of baking soda and one teaspoon of horticultural oil in a quart of water is a very good fungicide – will kill powdery mildew on the spot and will help with most fungus attacks

4. Soapy water will kill many insects and should be tried first before more toxic materials – kills spiders really well
5. When using any chemical, always read the label and follow the label directions; it is the law.