

# Timely Turf Tips

## November 2014

**Feels like winter could be coming.** The weatherman is saying that the temperature should be dropping too this week. Goodbye, beautiful fall. Hello, winter. This change will have some of us spending more time inside, seeking the warmth of our home. Realize that there are beady-eyed little intruders (i.e. mice) that will want to do the same. Seal any openings on the exterior of your home to prevent them from entering. Consider using traps or bait to control them before they cause damage if they find a way inside. Stop by the mill to see our full assortment of products and use the coupon below to save some cash.

### End of the Growing Season Chores:

- Keep mowing the grass until it stops growing. Remember to decrease the cutting height to 2 to 2 ½ inches for the last two or three mowing of the year. Longer grass gives meadow voles (a.k.a. field mice) food and protection, which can lead to turf damage next spring.
- Keep watering trees, shrubs, and perennial gardens until the ground freezes. This is especially important for evergreens that will continue to lose moisture all winter due to transpiration. As a way to test if the ground is moist enough, try digging down 4-6" to check if the soil is wet after watering. Check again a day later and water again if the soil is dry.
- Keep raking leaves or mulch them with the mower if not too thick on the lawn.
- Remember to store herbicides/pesticides in a cool, dark and dry area. Liquids must not freeze. Secure all products from children and pets.
- Provide mulch to insulate marginal perennials after the ground freezes. The mulch is meant to keep the ground frozen, minimizing thawing/freezing occurrences and severe cold temperatures that can damage plants.
- Protect strawberries with a 4-6" layer of clean straw or marsh hay mulch for the winter. Apply after the top ½" of soil is frozen.
- Remove any remaining plant material from your garden to thwart harmful insects and lessen disease. Dispose of any diseased foliage in the trash, not your compost pile.
- To prevent breakage from freezing, empty and store ceramic and clay pots. Spread old potting soil as a top dressing for your perennials. Wash pots with a solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water to sanitize them.
- Disconnect, drain and store hoses after the last watering. Don't forget to drain any rain barrels.
- Check around the garden or yard for any stray tools. Clean by removing soil with a wire brush and sanitize them with the solution mentioned earlier for pots. Sharpen and oil any cutting tools, including shovels, to prepare them for next spring.



### Clean your bird feeders

Feeders should be cleaned regularly (we would recommend at least four times a year) to prevent bacterial diseases that can sicken birds. Clean feeders well, and then soak in a sanitizing solution of 1 part chloride bleach to 9 parts water, allowing the solution to be on the feeder for 3-5 minutes. Rinse thoroughly with clean water and allow it to dry completely before refilling.

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