

5 Tips to Put Your Yard and Garden to Bed This Fall

Live Green in Your Yard and Garden

Submitted by CRD Environmental Services

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The days may be getting shorter and night's cooler, but it's not quite time to put away the garden tools. Fall maintenance helps prepare your yard and garden for the returning rains and the following dry summer. Every summer, lawn care is a major draw in our water supply, but a healthy lawn needs less water. In a changing climate with more intense rainfall in the winter months and longer dry spells in the summer, saving water and slowing the flow of rainwater runoff can help protect aquatic environments, our water supply and build resilience in the region.

Rainwater flows quickly off hard surfaces like roads and buildings into the storm drain system, which heads to local streams, rivers and the ocean. Along the way, rain can pick up chemicals that pollute waterways and high runoff can overwhelm the storm drain system causing flooding, erosion and fish habitat degradation. You can help protect our water supply and the environment with these five fall maintenance tips:

1. Complete fall [lawn care](#) for a thriving water wise lawn next summer:
 - ✓ Remove dead matted grass by de-thatching
 - ✓ Aerate to allow water and nutrients to seep into the soil more easily
 - ✓ Apply lime if needed
 - ✓ Top dress with compost and overseed with drought-tolerant alternative like micro clover
 - ✓ Adjust your watering to account for rainfall.
2. Winterize your irrigation system as even a quick freeze can wreak havoc on the system causing leaks and damage. Learn how with the CRD [Irrigation Maintenance Series](#) on YouTube.
3. Manage the rainwater runoff coming off hard surfaces by installing a [rain barrel](#), installing a properly designed [rain garden](#) and switching to [permeable paving](#) like grid pavers or gravel.
4. Remove leaves from the gutters and storm drains to prevent water damage and flooding. Add the leaves to the garden beds as [mulch](#) to prevent soil from washing away and add nutrients to soil.
5. Add [native plants](#) in the fall to take advantage of the winter rains and roots will be more established for the dry summer months. Convert unused areas of lawn to a native plant meadow or rain garden. No watering is needed once native plants are established and they will support local birds and pollinators.

Learn more ways to live green in your yard and garden at www.crd.bc.ca/livegreen.