



Preparing Your Garden for Fall Country Basket Garden Centre

www.countrybasketniagara.com

Fall is a great time to get things done in the garden. The weather is cooler, and the ground tends to be better hydrated from fall rain, making ideal conditions for dividing existing plants and getting new plants established. It's also much more comfortable weather for digging holes!

While spring is traditionally when gardeners think about planning or changing up their gardens, in fall they've had a chance to see how existing plants have performed, what needs to be moved, and where new plants could be added.

Time to Divide

Divide perennials in fall when their roots are strong and healthy from a vigorous growing season. This is especially important for well-established plants that have become too big or are suffering from their own success. It's best to dig up the whole plant, carefully divide it and replant the divisions, then to try to cut off pieces in the ground with a shovel or trowel.

Don't forget to continue watering your plants as long as they are green and growing. They'll require less frequent watering now that the days are getting shorter and cooler. Evergreen plants, especially those with dense foliage such as emerald cedars, will need watering right up until the ground freezes so they don't get dehydrated by winter winds.

Pruning

If you're anxious to cut things back, remember there are still a few weeks of good growing time in September and early October, when plants are using their leaves to bring nutrients into their roots to store energy for next spring. That's why with shrubs, it's better to wait until they've dropped their leaves for the season before doing fall pruning, usually around mid to late October. If you can, hold off until late winter or early spring, while the plant is fully dormant, for major pruning of shrubs and trees. Before you do prune, make sure your tools are clean and sharp.

However, as many perennials finish flowering throughout late summer and fall, their flower stems and tired-looking foliage can be cut back to make them look tidier. This allows more light and air to reach remaining foliage so the plant can "juice up" its roots before it goes into winter dormancy.

Fertilizing

You may be tempted to treat your plants to a last dose of fertilizer. Applying some fresh compost and mulch is fine but refrain from using water-soluble or granular fertilizers in your garden late in the season. While fall is a great time to fertilize your lawn, it's not the best time to fertilize your garden. In most cases, there's no need to fertilize it past mid-August.

As the days get shorter and cooler, plants are beginning to direct their energy from new growth and reproduction (flowers, fruit or seeds) to storing energy to get them through the winter. It's not good for trees and shrubs to be producing a lot of new fertilizer-induced foliage so late. However, if you're dividing plants or adding new plants, a handful of bonemeal tossed in the planting hole will help establish roots.

You can also add bonemeal or hen manure when planting bulbs in fall. Hen manure is known to repel squirrels, which can help prevent your tulip bulbs from being dug up. Beginning in early September, garden centres carry spring-blooming bulbs which can be planted now and throughout October. Shop early for the best selection of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, snowdrops, crocuses, allium and other spring delights. Check bloom times – some bulbs bloom before trees' leaf out in spring, so they can be added to spots that will be shady in the summer.

Visit your Garden Centre

Garden centres offer fall-blooming annuals to add fresh colour to your garden for September and October. There are fall mums, of course, as well as pansies, flowering

kale, and autumn-toned flowers and grasses. You can even find cornstalks, straw bales, and pumpkins to complete your porch displays.

Fall is a great time to visit your favourite garden centre to take advantage of end-of-season sales on perennials, ornamental grasses, shrubs, and trees.

Right now, **Country Basket Garden Centre at 10008 Lundy's Lane in Niagara Falls has 60 per cent off all its nursery stock.** We also have fall outdoor décor, and a great selection of flower bulbs to plant now for spring. Country Basket is open 9-5 Tuesday to Saturday and 10-4 Sunday. Come in and find some new treasures for your garden!

Remember Country Garden Baskets is a VCA Loyalty Partner – with your VCA membership you will receive a 10% at the store.

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