



Getting Rid of Leaves

As fall moves in, it brings crisp temperatures, bonfire weather and leaves changing to beautiful colors. When the trees lose their cover, the result on the ground can be a nightmare to adults but a wonderland for kids.

If you have many trees on your property, your once-luscious lawn will soon be replaced with leaves littering your yard. Leaf removal can be a chore for many yards in the country, luckily there are tools available to make the job easier.

Build Your Leaf-Removal Arsenal

For many yards, a traditional rake just isn't enough to efficiently eliminate the leaves that fall. Consider equipping yourself with these helpful tools to make the process easier.

- Leaf blower: This self-explanatory tool allows operators to blow leaves into a certain area on their property. They make quick

work of problem areas. You can find these tools in battery-, gas- or electric-powered options.

- Lawn mower: A quality lawn mower is still useful even after the grass stops growing. Consider adding a mulch bag to your mower to quickly collect fallen leaves.

- Tarp: Once you have the leaves in a neat pile, then what? If you position them on a tarp while you make your pile, you can easily bundle them up and dispose of them responsibly.

Safe Burning

For some, using leaves as compost is a fall tradition. They are packed with nutrients that other plants rely on to flourish. You can add grass trimmings, organic manure and surprisingly, dryer lint into this pile.

For many others, the preferred method of disposing leaves is to burn them. When starting a fire, follow these safety tips from the American Red Cross:

- Clear leaves away from the home and other buildings and only burn in accordance to your local laws and guidelines.

- Be prepared for a fire to get out of control. You should always keep an extinguisher, rake, ax and bucket available when burning leaves.

- Install smoke alarms on every level and in every room of your home. In case a fire spreads to your structure without warning, your loved ones inside will be alerted.

For the Kids

For kids, there isn't a better part to fall than collapsing in a giant pile of leaves. Before disposing of them, allow the little ones to play for a while. You can even find fun-themed garbage bags which resemble silly characters once filled. This is a great way to provide the kiddos with entertainment while getting a little help clearing the leaves.

Fall Landscape Tips

Even though temperatures may be chilly during autumn, there is still plenty to do outdoors to ensure your lawn will look great next spring. Break out your sweatshirt and get outside to take care of some important lawn maintenance.

Keep Mowing

Don't skip mowing your lawn just because the temperatures aren't ideal. Once grass grows too long, it acts as a cover to surrounding blades. Sunlight is crucial to the well-being of a healthy lawn. When snow falls, long grass is easily packed down and promotes snow mold. The University of Minnesota Extension defines this type of mold as a fungal disease that appears in early spring as the snow melts. It is known to cause circular, straw-colored patches once the weather begins warming up.

Fix Damaged Concrete

If you notice your driveway or walkway has cracks in the concrete, fall is the time to correct them. Once it is cold enough for water to freeze, it will cause further damage to any defects in the concrete on your property. Consider applying a sealant to fill the cracks or contact a professional to ensure your walkways won't suffer even further during any upcoming cold weather.

Find a Deal on New Plants

While each region may see different success stories when planting trees, the Morton Arboretum states fall is a great time to get the plants in the ground because:

- Temperatures are typically moderate to cool, giving trees the chance to grow without becoming stressed by extreme heat.
- Transpiration is low and root-generation potential is high.

Local nurseries will likely have awesome sales on their plants that are left over from the summer. Talk to them to see which species can survive being in the ground during the winter, or how to preserve them until next spring.

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