

**Preparing the Garden for the Winter Ahead**  
**Glastonbury Partners in Planting, Inc.**

**Information culled from various books, UConn Master Gardener training,  
and from Connecticut Gardener ([www.ctgardener.com](http://www.ctgardener.com) to order)**

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Take a soil sample – UConn Home and Garden Center 877-486-6271,  
[www.canr.uconn.edu/plsci/stlab.htm](http://www.canr.uconn.edu/plsci/stlab.htm)  
or Ct Agricultural Experiment Station – Windsor – 860-683-4977  
[www.caes.state.ct.us](http://www.caes.state.ct.us)

Lime garden bed/lawn as recommended on test – fall best time to lime  
Add lime around lime-loving perennials (baby's breath, bellflower, clematis,  
delphinium, dianthus, candytuft, German or bearded iris, lavender, lilac, and  
scabiosa)

Get spring bulbs planted by mid-October – give time to grow roots before  
ground freezes. If planting later in the month, mulch to keep soil warmer

Lawn fertilization – as necessary – best mid-September to mid-October  
according to UConn's Turf Program (2 pounds per 1000 feet for the year –  
at least half slow-release) Top dress with compost?  
Leave lawn 2 inches high for winter

Fall planting of perennials – You need 4-6 weeks for roots to become  
established before winter's deep freeze - Nov. 1 in zone 5 and Nov. 15 in  
zone 6.

Soil in fall is warmer than in spring, encouraging root growth. There are  
also fewer diseases and insects, and a better chance of rain.

Cover with mulch to keep roots growing longer (but be on lookout for  
rodents until ground freezes). Mulch helps prevent frost heave.

Water until the ground freezes if there is not adequate rain.

Tree and shrub planting –

Do not plant in fall – (from Connecticut Gardener)

Birch (betula varieties)	Hornbeam (Carpinus)
Dogwood (cornus)	Hawthorne (Crataegus)
Golden Rain Tree (Koelreuteria paniculata)	Zelkova
Tulip tree (Liriodendron tulipia)	Weeping willow (salix)
Magnolia	
Sourwood (Oxydendrum arboretum)	
London Plane (Plantanus x acerifolia)	
Poplar and Aspen (Populus)	
All stone fruits	
Oak (Quercus)	

Anti-dessicants

Fertilizing in fall – could trigger new growth that would be winter-killed  
Apply after leaf drop or hard freeze only to dormant trees/shrubs for uptake  
and use when warmer – or wait until late winter/early spring

Avoid fall pruning – wait until winter

Conifers – minimizes sap and resin flow from cut branches

Shrubs – summer bloomers only – do not trim spring bloomers

After freeze –

Sanitation !!!

Especially important in vegetable garden

Clear all perennial foliage that is diseased and remove (do not add to  
compost)

Cut back perennials once they are no longer green – while green they are  
still providing nutrition to roots to help through winter

Do not cut back mums you want to perennialize, or subshrubs until spring  
(butterfly bush, blue mist shrub, artemesia 'Powis Castle', Russian sage,  
Montauk daisy, candytuft, basket of gold, red hot poker, rock rose). Don't  
trim semi-evergreen perennials (hellebore, bergenia, and liriopie)

Leave perennials like echinacea, rudbeckia, ornamental grasses, other plants  
with winter interest

Do not cut perennials too close to crown – leave a few inches

Dig tender bulbs –dahlias, cannas Store at 55-60 degrees

**Remove fall leaves from beds and base of shrubs – provides a warm home for rodents. Especially important for maple and hickory leaves which mat down**

**Add organic matter to beds, or wait until spring**

**Winter mulching – after ground freezes to protect perennials (December, even January)**