

BASIC FALL GARDENING TIPS



Toledo GROWS Best Practices—Tending a Garden

Extending the Season

In the fall, your garden is still growing. However, bear in mind, the first average frost date in Northwest Ohio is October 15th. Plant damaging frost occurs when nighttime temperatures drop to 36 degrees or below and will harm vegetable plants. Freezing occurs at 32 degrees which can kill many vegetable plants.

Warm Weather Crops

- Warm crops will be damaged/killed by frost
- To extend your harvest season, if one or two nights of frost are followed by several nights of higher temperatures, cover plants with something protective and remove each morning.
- These include tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, squash, zucchini, some herbs, lettuce, pumpkins, beans, greens, etc.



Cold Weather Crops

- Cold/Cole crops can withstand a few light frosts and thrive in the cooler 60s to high 30s during the day and high-mid 30s at night.
- Beyond October, to get several more weeks to a month of growing/harvest time, use row covers.
- These include broccoli, spinach, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, kohlrabi, mustard greens, turnips, beets, carrots, and potatoes, etc.



Fall Tasks

- Document - Before cleaning out the garden, make a paper diagram. Mark which plants were planted where, creating a reference guide for next spring. Note which plant varieties did well and which did not, to assist in deciding which are worth the effort to grow.
- Rotate – Make a plan, based on the diagram, to rotate crops in the same plant families for good health and better harvest. This will help keep similar plants from passing diseases to each other and keeps them from depleting similar nutrients from the garden soil. Visit our website for the Vegetable Garden Plant Rotation tip sheet.
- Soil Testing – Best to sample every three years, or if garden plants lacked vigor or did not produce well. Collect soil samples before adding compost. Visit ag.umass.edu/services/soil for soil testing information and to download instructions and a Home Grounds and Gardening Form to mail in with samples. Then amend the soil according to the results and recommendations.
- Fall Composting - After cleaning out garden beds, add two inches of compost to each. Add more to a raised bed if the soil level is below half the bed height. This way, microbes can get a head start incorporating the compost nutrients into the soil, so by planting time these nutrients are available to the plants. Compost can also be added in the spring, at least six to eight weeks before planting so the microbes have time to ingest and release the nutrients into the soil.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services

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