

Free Organic Fertilizer

All set for another article telling you the jobs you should be tackling from your “to do” list this winter?

Well, think again! I’m not going to tell you to clean and sharpen your shovels (although we should all be doing that!), nor am I going to give you a schedule to get your fruit trees pruned and your roses cut back (although those activities need to be done too).

This idea will give you more flowers and produce more veggies while saving you water (which saves you time and money) and save even more time since it should cut down on the weeding too. The best part is it can all be yours for free. No money. Just some time and energy this winter to have a better garden come spring and summer.

A novel or brand new tip? Nope. This tip is as old as the hills. Enrich your soil this winter & you will reap the benefits later.

Animal Waste: I’m lucky enough to have horses and chickens on my property, so I regularly add the bedding materials to my garden areas. If you’re not out in farm country, there will still be places to search for this Garden Gold. Drag out the yellow pages, or keep your eyes open as you drive through your community. Watch for businesses that need to dispose of animal waste & then make a contact. Stop in when you see a riding stable & ask if you can pick up a container full of fertilizer. Locate the feed store closest to you and ask if you can post a Wanted notice on a bulletin board. Put an ad on Craigslist and you’ll probably be blessed with several contacts.

Wood Chips / Sawdust: Besides animal wastes, you could also be searching out businesses that work with wood for sawdust and wood chips. Both of these make great mulch and will cut down

on the need to water as often. Winter is a great time to spend digging up contacts since we can't be out digging in the dirt.

Coffee Grinds: Coffee stands regularly need to dispose of used coffee grounds, and while there is no real proof they provide nutrients to your soil, they do seem to add a non clumping sort of texture to my gardens. Living in Starbucks land as I do (the Pacific NW), coffee grounds are prolific and again – free.

Yard Waste: If you didn't get all your fall leaves picked up, do it now and stick them in black trash bags. Poke some air holes in the bags, close them up and store someplace where they won't freeze. They will start decomposing and be ready to dig into your garden space come spring!

The winter will barely be long enough if you start on this list now. There are so many sources of free items to add to your soil, you might not even have time to sharpen that shovel!