Closing Down the Garden



Here’s your quick reminder that now is probably the time to start thinking about closing up the garden if you haven’t already done so. The cold weather is slowly trickling in, and garden production is creeping to a halt. Don’t wait till the last minute to put away tools, pull out plants, and get everything ready for the winter season. Scrambling at the last minute is a pain in the neck. Trust me. I’ve done it. Once the snow starts to fall, every task you had planned becomes infinitely more challenging to complete. What does closing the garden entail? Here’s a quick breakdown of tasks to put on your to-do list:

Pull out dead plants. Don’t leave dead plant material behind. It’s likely to attract pests and may even be harboring disease.

Cut back perennials (Careful. Some perennials are best pruned in the fall, while others do best when pruned in the spring).

Don’t stop harvesting. There are likely still a few goodies left to pick; be it lettuce, kale, or Asian greens.

Tackle any overgrown areas that are filled with weeds. If you don’t do it now, you’ll have to deal with it in the spring.

Tidy up accessories. Put away any decorations or delicate items sitting around your garden, deck, porch, or patio.

Disinfect. Clean your tools and store them safely away. Tidy up your seed starting equipment if you haven’t already.

Mulch, mulch, mulch. Mulch tender plants and perennials before winter arrives.

Add protection. Protect your winter-hardy plants with a cold frame if you haven’t done so yet. Don’t forget to keep watering them!

Encourage healthy soil. Consider planting cover crops if it’s still warm enough in your area.

There’s still time for planting, too! Fall is the ideal planting time for a variety of flower bulbs. If you’ve ordered seed garlic, you should be receiving it soon and planting it as soon as it arrives. Certain trees and shrubs also do best when planted in the fall.

Keep watering your plants. They ain’t all dead yet and they’re still thirsty!

Prep your beds. I like to mulch mine with leaves prior to the winter. This year, I’ve also added cardboard atop my beds to keep weeds down. I’ll enjoy a bit of a blank slate when the spring comes around.

Do you have any fall garden rituals? Is there something you always forget to do? Have you learned new tricks of the trade throughout the years? Leave a comment and share your garden clean up tips!