

Preparing Your Outdoor Spaces for Fall and Winter



Fall and winter can be hard on your grasses, trees and flowers. Taking care of outdoor spaces before big seasonal changes can help prevent damage and reduce the workload in the spring.

Preparing your outdoor spaces for fall and winter not only allows you to enjoy your outdoor area year-round but also offers practical benefits such as property value enhancement, reduced maintenance, and improved safety and energy efficiency. It's an investment that can enhance your

overall quality of life and the value of your property.

Late October to mid-November is the perfect time to plant, weed, prune, and mulch, so your yard looks nicer and your plants will be protected during the winter.

Whether you're selling your home, moving into a new home, or simply want to protect your landscape, here are six ways to ensure your outdoor oasis remains inviting, comfortable, and well-maintained during the cooler months ahead.

1. Trim trees of dead branches for your own and neighbors' safety. November to March are ideal times to prune trees to give them a better shape and prevent branches from blowing against the house.

2. Now is the time to get rid of leggy shrubs and plant new ones. Plant new shade trees with leaves that turn colors. Few fall sights are as beautiful as a maple tree with flaming red leaves or a ginkgo with golden yellow leaves.

3. Clean out flower beds and re-mulch with a layer of "wood chips, tree bark, leaves or other organic material."

4. October and November are the ideal times to plant bulbs before the ground gets hard. You can also plant pansies, ornamental kale, ornamental cabbage and other cool-season annuals.

5. Pull weeds from the lawn after a rain so they'll be easier to pull out by the roots. They'll be less likely to crop up again in the spring.

6. Preparing your outdoor space for fall and winter allows you to decorate it for the holidays and create a festive atmosphere. Now you are ready to get out the lights, wreaths, and other decorations to celebrate the seasons! ■

Source: Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

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Can Smart Thermostats Save You Money?



If you like to keep up with the latest gadgets and technology advancements, you're probably going to love the benefits of switching over to a smart thermostat to control your home's thermostat. Smart thermostats offer an array of benefits compared to older manual thermostat types, as well as programmable thermostats. Aside from the added convenience of using a smart thermostat, they can also help you save a significant amount of money on your energy bills.

Controlling Your Thermostat from Anywhere

The ability to control your thermostat remotely is a huge convenience, but the ability to control your home temperature depending on your location or schedule will save you money too.

Regular Energy Reports

Smart thermostats provide regular energy reports to see how you're using your HVAC system. If energy bills are high, you can make adjustments to your temperature settings for additional savings. All of this data can be accessed directly from your smartphone or device.

Monitoring Your Heating and Cooling System

Smart thermostats can monitor for energy spikes that could indicate a repair or maintenance is needed. This advanced warning of potential issues alerts you before a minor repair becomes major.

Pre-Setting the Thermostat

A smart thermostat allows you to program temperature settings based on the time of day and day of the week. Pre-setting allows greater control of energy use based on your schedule.

AI Technology

Smart thermostats use AI technology to learn your temperature preferences and can automatically adjust the thermostats accordingly, saving on energy and money. ■

Source: ADT | SafeStreets



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Creative Ideas for DIY Holiday Decorating



Nothing inspires festive decor like the holidays, but you don't have to break the bank at your local retail store to get the look you want. Channel your inner creativity and make your own DIY holiday decorations. Here are some great ideas to get you in the holiday spirit.

Make Your Own Fireplace

The fireplace can be a stunning focal point when decorated for the holidays. But what if you don't have

one? Create a fun faux fireplace. Take a large piece of canvas, and cover it in chalkboard paint. Hang the canvas on the wall near the floor, and draw your own cozy fireplace with chalk.

Add Eye-catching Details

Use spray paint to make ordinary objects—pine cones, mason jars, and ornaments—sparkle for the holidays. Another idea is to fashion colorful Christmas stockings from old sweaters to hang from the mantel (real or faux). Simply use a stocking template to cut the sweater, sew up the sides, and you're done.

Creative Centerpiece Ideas

To make a pretty holiday centerpiece for the kitchen or dining table, fill a porcelain bowl with yarn-wrapped pine cones and

small mercury glass balls. If you have an extra decorative wreath, lay it flat on the table, and fill the opening in the center with pillar candles nestled inside hurricane jars.

Treat Guests to a Warm Welcome

To create a warm and welcoming entrance to your home, illuminate your sidewalk or front porch with votive candles placed into mason jars that you've filled halfway with Epsom salts.

No Tree? No Problem

Just because you don't have a traditional tree doesn't mean you can't get creative this year. Fill a large floor vase with evergreen clippings—it's the perfect stand-in for a Christmas tree in small spaces. Add some tiny ornaments onto the branches, and pile the presents underneath. Be sure to change the water every few days to ensure the greenery looks its best all season long. ■

Source: CORT Furniture Rental



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