

# FALL CARE TIPS

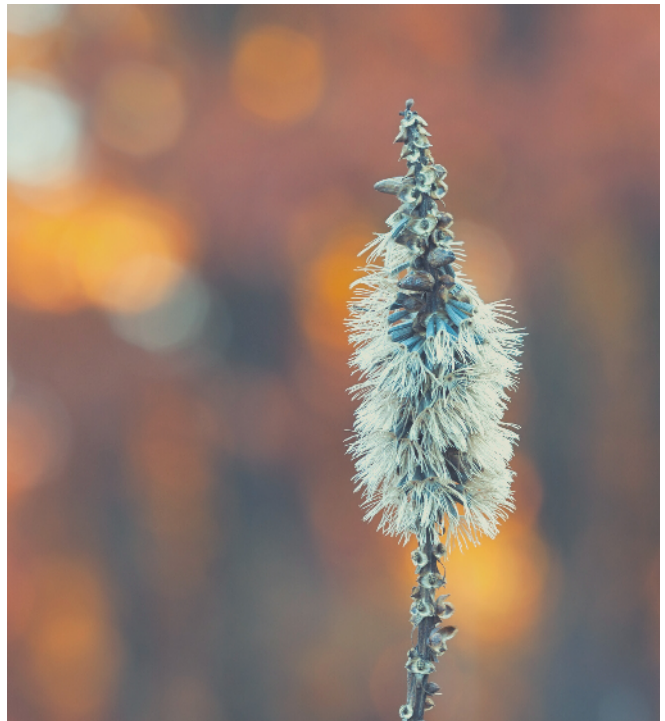


## LEAF CLEAN UP

It's fall and that means falling leaves. In moderation, leaves from a nearby tree can be beneficial for a native garden. In fact, some amount of leaves (less than 2") can act as a natural mulch, but, just as with mulch, too much can smother your garden. Be sure to prevent leaves from piling up on top of your perennials. If your garden is connected to a downspout, check to make sure leaves are not clogging the inlet and clear as necessary. Redistribute stone at the inlet as needed to make sure water is dispersing evenly.

## LEAVE DORMANT PLANTS UNTIL SPRING

As fall progresses, many gardeners feel the urge to prune back dormant stalks. While those drying stalks may look unappealing to some, they are extremely valuable to your local wildlife. Leaving stalks from plants like coneflower and blackeyed Susan can provide an important food source for birds, especially over the winter when food may be scarce. As the stalks dry, seeds are released. Allowing your perennials to self-seed will also help fill in your garden.



# FILL IN YOUR GARDEN

Fall is a great time to fill out your garden. Whether it is by planting new perennials, spreading seeds, or dividing existing plants, it is an ideal time to fill in empty space in your garden. Remember, the more space your perennials take up, the less space there will be for weeds.

## PLANT

If you are looking to add more variety to your garden, now is the time to add new perennials. The cooler temperatures make the transition easier for plants, and it allows plants to devote their energy to developing their root system before spring flower blooms require energy resources.



## DIVIDE

Most perennials grow in clusters and will need to be divided about once every three years. This method of propagating perennials involves digging up a cluster of plants, separating the plants at the root, and then replanting them. You don't have to be an expert gardener to successfully divide perennials, but tutorial videos are available online for additional guidance.



## SEED

As we get further into fall, many of your plants will develop seeds. Once these seeds have dried out and hardened, you can spread them throughout your garden to encourage new growth the following spring. It is important to do this before you mulch. If the seeds are spread on new mulch, they will have trouble taking root and may blow away.

## MULCH

Once you have cleared the fallen leaves, planted your new plants and divided the old ones, and sprinkled your perennial seeds around, it is time to mulch. If your old mulch hasn't fully decomposed, you can remove whatever is left of it before adding new mulch. It is best to spread about 2" of mulch over the garden. Avoid mulching over any perennials and be sure not to pile mulch up around trees and shrubs.