

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Care for your garden in the winter

Many gardeners will visit and working their garden daily during the hot summer months by preparing the garden, weeding, caring for the young crops, watering and harvesting, but it's very important that you don't just visit your garden during the vegetables' growth seasons. By providing the correct winter care, you can keep your garden healthy all year long and better prepare it for its prime season.

Protecting plants:

Some plants may not die off and instead, go dormant during the winter season. It is important to prepare these plants correctly for the colder months so you will be able to enjoy them again in the next year. This includes plants like roses, bulbs and more. For perennials, the easiest to care for during the winter, most times gardeners just need to cut them back a tad and add a thick layer of mulch to protect the bulbs under the surface for the coming cold months. Depending on the type of perennial you grow in the garden may determine the amount of protection it needs, so be sure to do your research.

For annuals, you may want to collect the seeds of your favorite plants since the cold will end up killing them. Once a killing frost has hit, pull up the dead annuals and discard of them or compost them. Sometimes, annuals drop self-sown seeds so to be safe, add a thick layer of mulch if you think your annuals will self-sow and germinate again in the spring.

For bulbs, oftentimes you will need to dig them up and store them during the cold



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months so you can plant them again when it gets warmer. Dig them up and brush off excess dirt. Then, mulch the bulb beds anyway so the soil doesn't shift too much during the winter. Store the bulbs in a breathable container like cardboard. Do not store them in plastic. Then, place the bulbs in a cool, dry area until you are ready to plant them again.

Beautifying the garden:

During the winter, or mostly in the early but chilly months, make sure you remove debris and any dead plants from your garden so they don't serve as a house for unwanted pests. By removing rotted and dead plants, you will be taking care of your garden by preventing the spread of fungus, disease and pests. Make sure you dispose of the spent plants correctly because sometimes, placing them in your compost pile can spread potential disease even more.



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Pruning:

For the plants that stay, make sure you prune out the dead or diseased branches before the winter season hits. Don't remove any branches that are necessary for the structure, but adequate pruning can help your plant go dormant for the winter season.

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