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**The Secrets Of Winterizing Your Garden**

**By Scott Patterson**

If you're like most people it isn't the thought of winterizing your garden that gets you, it's figuring out where to start. There's just so much to do that it can sometimes be hard to know where to begin!

Well, relax. The harvest is in and putting your garden to bed, so to speak, is one of the more fun parts of gardening. You have a nice full cellar and pantry. The hard work is done, and you can relish the idea of preparing for next year's garden.

Which is the perfect place to start winterizing your garden. One of the first things you should do is clean all the debris from your garden. Get rid of dead foliage, leaves, roots, stakes and row markers. The debris you clean from your garden can be added to your compost heap which will be a big help come spring. You want to be sure, though, not to add any diseased debris or pest infected dead leaves or stalks in your compost pile. You don't want to accidentally spread a disease from this year's garden to next year's.

And now that you're in cleaning mode, get out the rake and attack those fallen leaves scattered across your lawn. Why is it so important to remove leaves from your lawn? Because the grass underneath the leaves still needs all light it can get. Raking leaves from your lawn also lets adequate air and moisture get to living plants in your yard. After all, you don't want any of your lovely grass and plants to suffocate!

Winterizing your garden also means mulching. You want to spread a light layer of mulch, just a few inches of it, around your trees and shrubs. This helps keep the underground temperature more stable throughout the winter, as well as offers much-needed protection to roots underneath the surface. Careful, though, too much mulch will become a home for rodents, which is the last thing you want. Mice just love to chew on bark, so don't give them a place to hide while they munch away.

When winterizing your garden, you will also want to take the time to plan next year's vegetable garden. After ridding your vegetable garden plot of debris, old leaves and roots, plan where you want to put next year's vegetables. Take a pad with you out to the garden and make a sketch of where you want to put all your lovely vegetable plants in the spring. Doing this helps you make the most use of

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your garden area. No space goes unused if you take the time to plan—which means more delicious vegetables for you next summer and fall!

You'll also want to be sure you've taken proper care to winterize your garden equipment and tools. Drain the gas from your lawnmower's tank, weed eater and other garden equipment. You may also want to put the battery from the lawnmower and any other garden equipment into storage where it will remain at a steady, above-freezing temperature. This will help lengthen the life of the battery, which is good, because there's nothing worse than getting ready or needing to mow only to find your lawnmower battery is dead.

Take the time to put your tools and gardening utensils away for their long winter's nap too. Make sure they're stored where mice can't nibble on the handles (they like all kinds of wood, you know). Also make sure they're all cleaned before you store them away. And yes, please throw away any tools that are worn out and replace them or start dropping hints to your family and friends about tools and

equipment you need for gardening. This not only gives your family ideas for holiday gifts, it ensures that you won't be all excited and ready to start next year's gardening only to have tools breaking on you left and right, leaving you frustrated and having to make extra trips to the local home improvement store.

Now that your garden tools are ready for winter, the next step in winterizing your garden is to hit the local bookstores (or favorite online gardening site!). Yes, you read that correctly. Once the work of winterizing your garden's behind you, it's time to curl up on the sofa in front of the fire with a lovely stack of gardening books beside you. Because the only thing that comes close to bringing you the same enjoyment that being in your garden does is being engrossed in a great book about gardening!

Scott J. Patterson is the owner of Wow Gardens Weekly, a newsletter filled with fr\*e gardening tips and information. For weekly gardening advice and a fr\*e rose gardening ebook, check-out the following link:

<http://www.wowgardens.com/wg.html>

### **A Beginners Guide To Garden Bridges**

**By Charles & Susan Truett**

Just because you dont have huge, elaborate gardens does not mean you cant accentuate what you do have with garden bridges. Garden bridges could be just what you need to turn those mediocre garden areas into something quite splendid.

Garden bridges can add a touch of country or formal design to a garden. Small garden bridges are easy to find. There are many garden bridges that you can find in garden centers or home improvement centers. One of the best places to find small garden bridges may be online. There are lots of sites that have many ideas for small garden bridges.

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If you are good with a hammer and nails you may even be able to make your own garden bridge. Plans are available at building stores and at online sites. You will find many choices for garden bridges at these online sites and you can also see photos of many different bridge styles.

A garden bridge can be a big benefit for your garden space. A small garden bridge will look attractive in a smaller garden and draw attention to a specific area.

You can choose the right small garden bridge if you do a little planning ahead of time. If you have a smaller garden you will want a smaller garden bridge. Look at the space you have and decide where a bridge would fit in. Consider more than one area and then choose your favorite.

There are some lovely gardens that are small in size but large in beauty because garden bridges have been added in just the right places.

We have a large number of styles and varieties of garden bridges available online. For more information and to learn more about

garden bridges

, visit:

Garden Bridges Online



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