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## **Monthly Lawn Care Tips**

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### **SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER: *Fall is in the Air***

As summer warmth turns to fall rains, it's tempting to give up the gardening and stay inside. However mid-September through the end of November is one of the best times to put time and effort into your yard. Getting a head start as nature slows down means less work and more time to enjoy your lawn garden the next year. Listed below are our tips for your fall lawn maintenance.



#### **Fertilizing**

Your lawn is preparing its root base before going dormant for the winter months. Early September and the end of November are good times to fertilize, helping your lawn to thicken up to discourage weeds.

Use a weed and feed formula only if you have extensive areas infested with dandelions or other weeds, but if you do, fall is the best time to apply it. Grass dislikes a very acidic soil, so if a soil pH test gives a result below 6.0, apply ground limestone. This will not kill moss, but will give the lawn grass a better chance to compete.

It is time to apply crane fly treatment to your lawn. Please review our [Monthly Lawn Care Tips: February](#) issue for details on knowing if your lawn has a crane fly infestation.

If you have bare spots, over-seeding with a grass mixture recommended for Western Washington lawns should be done before the end of October to give the seedlings a good start before cold weather sets in.

#### **Let Nature Water**

It is time to turn off your irrigation service and allow Mother Nature to take care of watering your lawn. It is important to properly shut down your irrigation system, and this is a service that Natural Concept Landscape can do for you.

## Leaves on Your Lawn

Be sure and keep the falling leaves off your grass as they will cause your grass to rot and you will end up with dead spots. Raking the leaves into your flower beds will provide a wonderful mulch. If you don't want to spend time raking them, run your lawn mower over your lawn two or three times. This will chop the leaves into fine pieces; they quickly decompose and add to your soil's structure.



## Mowing, Aerating and Overseeding

Keep mowing your lawn with the mower height at 2½ to 3 inches for as long as your grass needs it. And you leave your clippings on the lawn, because that recycles nutrients and adds to the soil structure. As we stated above, when leaves start to fall, you can mow-mulch those too. A light scattering of leaves will chop up nicely and disappear. When the leaves come down fast, put the bagger back on the mower and pick up those clippings. They make a great

compost starter.

Getting air to the roots of grasses is important, so if you didn't do this in spring, aerate your lawn now. Many tools are available to make light work of aeration, but for smaller lawns, a hefty whack with a garden fork or spike aerator will do the job just fine.

If you have bare spots in your yard, over-seeding with a grass mixture recommended for Western Washington lawns should be done before the end of October to give the seedlings a good start before cold weather sets in.

## Pruning Your Plants, Trees and Shrubs

Early fall is a good time to prune most shrubs and trees, when the weather is warm enough to encourage healing of cuts, but cool enough to discourage unwanted new growth. Complete your pruning by mid-October for best results. If you haven't already done so, be sure to deadhead old flower blooms to encourage fall growth. It's also a great time to refresh mulch around trees, shrubs, and perennials to reduce weeds and slow water evaporation from soil. Aim for a 2- to 3-inch-thick layer.

## Planters

If your containers look in need of a little pick-me-up, switch out tired summer annuals with seasonal color spots such as asters, chrysanthemums (like the burgundy ones pictured here) or cape plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*). Be sure to select colors that blend



with the remaining container plants for a cohesive look.

### **In Conclusion**

Every step of the way, Natural Concept Landscape is here to assist you with all of your lawn and garden care needs. We offer free consultations and excellent maintenance programs for a very affordable price. We are in the business of making your life a little greener, a little easier, and a lot more enjoyable. We are just a phone call away! Enjoy the beauty of Autumn!