



## **Fall Garden Cleanup General Guidelines**

Cleaning up and preparing your garden in the fall will make your spring garden healthier and reduce your workload later.

- Begin by examining your garden to see what worked, didn't work, what could be done differently or better.
- Consider plant revisions (species and location changes, size considerations, color, texture, pollinator activity, and adding accessories like rocks and logs).
- Select plants for fall installation while the soil is warm and to take advantage of winter rains. Plant spring blooming bulbs. Warm soil allows microorganisms to thrive so your new fall plants will establish their roots before the cold sets in.
- Leave the leaves! They are free mulch and provide winter shelter for creatures and insects. Plus, the leaves protect the soil from erosion and run off. Exceptions to this would be in fire prone areas where leaf and debris removal is a must.
- Eliminate as many weeds as possible.
- Aerate the soil with a garden fork, but don't till it which damages root systems. Aeration will allow water and air penetration, essentials for healthy soil and plants. Avoid soil compaction by limiting where you walk.
- Nutrients in the soil are depleted in the spring through summer months. Help the soil replenish nutrients by adding compost and slow-release organic amendments.
- Remove diseased plants by cutting them off at soil level. Remove any diseased leaves under the plants, such as those with black spot, fungus, and more that will infect new and existing plants in spring.
- Leave deadheads on plants that have seeds for birds to eat.
- Cut off broken or dead tree branches for safety, tree health, and appearance.

Remember, to maintain a vibrant habitat space, avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides.