

OCTOBER LANDSCAPE GUIDE

Lawns

- Early fall is a good time to apply broadleaf weed killers. Be sure to follow all label directions and choose a calm day to prevent spray drift.
- There is still time to make a fall fertilizer application. This helps to repair summer damage, strengthen roots for winter and quicken spring growth.
- Continue mowing the lawn as long as the grass is growing.
- Recycle lawn clippings, fallen leaves and other plant debris by starting a compost pile. Chop or grind leaves and mix them with soil and a little fertilizer to speed decomposition.
- If you don't like the thought of raking autumn leaves, they can be incorporated into your lawn. 1996 research found that a large amount of leaves can be added by regularly going over the lawn with a mulching lawnmower. The lawn continues to look good and benefits from the extra organic matter.
- Control broadleaf weeds by spraying lawns with an appropriate herbicide on a warm, calm day in early October. Seeds are germinating then, and the young weeds are relatively easy to control. Spot treating in the spring can take care of any that you miss now.



Trees, Shrubs and Vines

- Once leaves have fallen, check the trunks of maple, oak, cherry, poplar, crabapple and other trees for the cottony brown egg masses of gypsy moths. If found, scrape them off into a cup of soapy water. If your woodlot is heavily infested, contact your County Extension Office to see if you qualify for a county spray program.
- Balled and burlapped stock should be planted early this month.
- After leaves fall, plant or transplant deciduous trees and shrubs. Before planting, remove any wire, plastic cord, plastic burlap, or other nonbiodegradable materials from trunks or root balls. If left in place, they can girdle and kill a plant. Water newly-planted ornamentals until the ground freezes. The following transplants should receive a good layer of organic mulch to help them through their first winter: birch, flowering cherry and plum, redbud, dogwood, flowering pear, beech, hawthorn, oak, magnolia, willow, sweetgum, sourwood and tulip poplar. Support tall trees with stakes and guy wires as needed to prevent the wind from whipping or uprooting them. Use canvas or burlap tacked to stakes to shield newly planted evergreens against drying sun and wind or windblown salt spray.
- If spruce galls were a problem this year, treat around the time the sugar maples are in full color to kill the nymphs of the spruce gall adelgid.
- If spruces have been showing bronzing of the needles, you may have spruce spider mites. Shake foliage over white paper. Specks that move are mites.
- Protect tender barked trees and shrubs against damage by gnawing mice and rabbits by placing cylinders of quarter-inch hardware cloth around the trunks. To be most effective, they must extend 18 to 24 inches above the usual snow level.
- If the weather has been dry, water trees and shrubs weekly until the soil freezes. Evergreens particularly, need to go into winter well watered. They will continue to lose moisture from their foliage after frozen soil limits the ability of their roots to take up water to replace it, and needles or leaves can become severely dried out.