

YOU'RE NOT DONE YET:

CHORES FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.



Until the ground freezes, it's a perfect time to fertilize trees and shrubs. Food will be taken up by the roots and be available when needed next spring.



Continue raking leaves as they fall on the grass. Better yet, use your mower to mow the leaves into the grass. This ground-up foliage will enrich your soil and help to fertilize your lawn in an ecologically sound way.

Finish cleaning out all annuals and vegetable plants, clip perennial tops, pull weeds, and add to your compost. To reduce the carry-over of insect and disease problems, particularly black spot in roses, destroy infected leaves.

After removing vegetables and annuals, add lime and fertilizer to those beds. Spade it in well, but leave the soil in a rough condition over the winter. You can have your soil tested through the Cooperative Extension to find out proper additives. More information on that procedure can be found at: http://ccesuffolk.org/home/SearchForm?Search=soil+testing&action_results=Go

When the bulbs you've ordered by mail are delayed and frost is predicted, cover the area where they are to be planted with a thick layer of straw, hay, or leaves anchored with a plank or pine branches. This will keep the ground from freezing until you can start digging.



Deciduous trees may still be planted through November. You can often find bargains at this time of year. Don't wait too long--the soil should be above 55 degrees F at planting time. Water plants thoroughly when needed, until the ground is frozen. Wrap the trunks of thin-barked young trees in late November for winter protection and don't forget to remove the wrappings in March. Some trees are best saved for spring planting, such as magnolia, dogwood, tulip tree, red maple, birch, hawthorn, poplars, cherries, plum, and some oaks.

Avoid winter damage by removing dead, diseased, and broken branches from trees and shrubs. If there are any tender shrubs you will need to cover, drive the support poles into the ground before it freezes. Burlap can be applied later.



When using salt to remove ice and snow, be careful around driveway and walks. Salt can be very toxic to many plants, shrubs, and lawn grasses. A substitute can be sand or sawdust, or a combination of the two. Make sure you have a supply on hand of whatever you decide to use before the cold weather. If you plan to use beach sand, don't wait till it's frozen. Dig it up now, put in a pail, dunk it in plain tap water and keep for a few hours. Change and repeat a few times so the salt will wash away.

Store in open garbage bags until it dries and then seal it up for later use.

Grow new trees and shrubs by taking hardwood cuttings of the ones in your yard in late November, after all growth has stopped. Clean shears with rubbing alcohol or a bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water) to avoid spreading disease. Cut branches just above a leaf node, selecting young, straight shoots growing up from the center of the plant that are at least the diameter of a pencil. To winter over before planting, tie them in bundles, set in a cool, moist, and shaded area, and bury them in sand either in the garden or in a cold frame. Be sure to label them so you'll know what's what when you resurrect them in the spring. Then you'll cut them into smaller pieces, dip them in rooting hormone and plant in pots or outdoor beds.

Bring in lawn ornaments and decorative pots; protect your outdoor furniture. Clean and put away garden tools. After the last mowing of your lawn (at 2 inches high), winterize your mower or take it to the shop for cleaning and a tune-up. After the ground freezes to a 3" to 4" depth, mulch perennials and roses.

