

A Clean Garden This Fall Means A Disease-Free Garden Next Spring

After summer's garden harvest, many gardeners tend to think the season's work is done. However, it is important to clean up the garden each fall before calling it quits for the year.

Fall garden cleanup consists of clearing away stems, leaves and other debris, says Anne Streich, horticulture educator. Insect or disease infected material should be removed so that they do not overwinter in the garden and create problems the following spring. By clearing away debris, these pests can not overwinter in the garden and may not return as quickly the following growing season.

There is no specific time frame in which fall cleanup should be done. In fact, it is a gradual process that can take place as different plants produce their last fruits of the year. However, it is important to remember that most fruits and vegetables need to be harvested before the first frost, especially tender plants such as tomatoes and peppers. If a light frost comes

early, plants can easily be protected by covering them with a sheet or blanket. Hardier plants, such as pumpkins, tend to tolerate cooler weather better and should not be too much of a concern.

Most plant debris can be moved simply by pulling the plants out by hand. Fruit and vegetable plants tend to have a shallow root system that can easily be removed. Plant debris can be used to form a compost pile or can be tilled back into the garden.

A compost pile should be placed in an area that can receive a reasonable amount of both sun and moisture. Often, compost piles are placed near the garden for easy access. In order for the compost pile to prevent any weed seeds or diseases from overwintering, the compost pile must reach a temperature of at least 140 degrees. This ensures that by late summer of the following year, the compost will be suitable for use as a fertilizer on the garden.

In order for the compost to be of use, air must be al-

lowed to circulate throughout the entire pile and the carbon to nitrogen ratio needs to be around 30-to-1. This allows the microbes that break down the plant tissue to do their job. Rotate the compost about once a week using a pitchfork and be sure to incorporate new debris with the old. Excessive turning will cool the pile down and will take longer for compost to develop.

If there haven't been any problems with insects or disease it is acceptable to leave plant debris as a mulch. This debris can then be incorporated into the soil by tilling in the fall. Often it is important to leave the tops of perennials, such as asparagus, to hold in moisture and protect the roots' crowns for the next year's growth. Other perennial plants, such as rhubarb, should be cut to the ground after they have been hit by a frost. A layer of compost or mulch can help protect the crown from freeze-thaw damage.

Take Precautions To Avoid Serious Injury When Operating ATVs

All-Terrain Vehicle accidents were the leading cause of Nebraska agriculture fatalities in 2004 and have continued that trend in 2005 said Dave Morgan, UNL Safety Engineer. However, additional tragedies can be avoided if appropriate precautions are taken.

All ATV operators should take an ATV safety course. Whenever anyone operates a new piece of machinery, he or she should have training about the characteristics of the machinery, how it operates normally and how it operates in unusual situations. No one is immune to accidents, but the increased awareness a safety course provides will help ATV operators navigate the unexpected situations that often cause them. Many ATV manufacturers offer a tuition rebate program to cover the cost of a safety course.

Use extra caution when operating an ATV in risky situations. Many accidents occur when the driver is unfamiliar with the area and doesn't know about unpredictable conditions such as sudden drop offs or cattle trails hidden by

overgrowth. Slow down when riding in unfamiliar areas. Consider walking a proposed route before riding in rugged terrain to identify potential hazards.

Carrying equipment also can pose a risk. In particular, spray tanks and other liquid-filled containers can cause balance problems for ATVs when they're going up hills, sometimes tipping them over backward or sideways. Never exceed the capacity posted on luggage and equipment racks. Current ATVs are heavy enough that if they roll on top of someone, they will cause very serious or fatal injuries.

Always wear safety gear when using an ATV. It's essential to have an ATV helmet and vented goggles. Also wear full-length pants and boots and consider wearing long-sleeve shirts and gloves, which will protect the operator when riding in tall, heavy vegetation or brushy areas.

Follow all warning labels on the ATV. No one under 16 should operate an ATV and no passengers should ride along.



Windbreak Renovation and Pine Wilt Disease

Windbreaks are living things and need periodic care and rejuvenation for good health. Learn how to cope with the destruction caused by pine wilt disease and how to restore or reconstruct your windbreak without losing its benefits.



Weed Control on the Acreage

Living in the country just means you have more weeds to control. Learn how to identify and control many of the common weeds. You will learn about chemical and cultural control methods for specific weeds based on the weed's life cycle and its most vulnerable growth stage.



Nebraska-Friendly Landscapes

Nebraska-friendly landscapes enhance our living area by conserving and protecting water resources, providing biodiversity in plantings, conserving energy and more. Learn design principles, plant placement, maintenance, and plants for a Nebraska-friendly landscape.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension presents a series of programs, entitled Acreage Insights-Rural Living Clinics, targeting acreage owners and specifically designed to provide knowledge and skills to better manage a rural living environment.

The following clinics will be held in Lincoln at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road from 7-9 p.m.

For more information, contact Sarah Browning at (402) 727-2775.



"Well organized and presented. Very thorough — answered all questions we had before we needed to ask!"
— previous clinic attendee

CLINICS ARE \$10/PERSON ADVANCED REGISTRATION; \$15/PERSON AT THE DOOR
Preregistration deadline is **3 working days before clinic.**

If a minimum number of pre-registrants is not received, clinics will be cancelled — preregistered participants will be notified and receive a full refund.

REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE CHECK WHICH CLINIC(S) YOU ARE REGISTERING FOR

Windbreak Renovation and Pine Wilt Disease
 Lincoln — Sept. 14

Weed Control on the Acreage
 Lincoln — Oct. 12

Nebraska Friendly Landscapes
 Lincoln — Nov 16

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

\$10/person advanced registration, \$15/person at the door
Preregistration deadline: 3 working days before clinic.

Number attending _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Mail completed registration form and check (payable to UNL Extension) to:
UNL Extension in Dodge County
Acreage Insights
1206 W. 23rd St.
Fremont, NE 68025

We assure reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. For assistance, or if you require language interpretation, contact Extension in Dodge County at (402) 727-2775 three weeks prior to date of clinic.