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### Some Random Landscape Thoughts

Fall is the forgotten season when it comes to caring for your lawn and landscape. Many people just focus on cleaning up leaves and don't realize that their yard still needs care in order to keep it in good health for the next spring. Fall is the best time to give your lawn the love it needs, after the heat of summertime and right before the cold winter months.

As temperatures drop in late summer and early fall, cool-season grasses peak in growth. These grasses include Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine and tall fescue. Warm days and cool nights make fall the perfect time for establishing new grass and strengthening existing lawns.



Kentucky Bluegrass



Perennial Ryegrass



Fine Fescue



Tall Fescue

Fall temperatures signal warm-season grasses that their peak time has passed. These grasses include bermudagrass, centipede grass, zoysia grass, and bahiagrass. Warm-season grasses experience their most active growth in summer and are dormant in fall, thus requiring different care.



Bermudagrass



Centipede Grass



Zoysia Grass



Bahiagrass

Fall lawn care isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor, but the lawn of your dreams is within your reach. Take time now to check off your fall tasks, and take pride in a strong season finish.

Happy Landscaping!

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## Fall Tasks for Cool-Season Lawns

**Test your soil:** Fall soil testing takes the guesswork out of managing your lawn's soil pH and nutrition. Applying soil amendments in fall is recommended.

**Feed your lawn:** Fertilize about 6 weeks before your first expected frost. A high-nitrogen fertilizer, helps lawns establish vigorous roots, increase any energy reserves and survive winter.

**Overseed thin lawns:** Fall conditions are ideal for germinating cool-season grass seed. Overseeding thin lawns pays off with thick, strong, spring grass.

**Remove excess thatch:** Dethatching tools work to cut into the thatch layer, pull it up for removal, and restore a healthy interface between the grass and the soil.

**Aerate compacted soil:** Compacted soil restricts root development and limits soil oxygen. Aerators correct compaction by creating openings in the soil that invite air, water, and nutrients in.

**Keep watering:** Cool-season grass needs water. Healthy, established lawns generally need 1 inch of water a week, including precipitation.

**Keep mowing:** Mow your grass type based on grass growth instead of calendar days.

**Control weeds:** Use weed & feed on established cool-season lawns, and avoid newly seeded areas.

**Clean up leaves:** Left untended, mats of fallen leaves suffocate lawn grasses and invite disease.

## Fall Tasks for Warm-Season Lawns

**Test your soil:** Fall soil testing benefits all lawns. Follow the recommendations for corrections, and you'll be ahead of the game in spring.

**Stop fertilizing:** Your last lawn feeding should be 6-8 weeks before the first fall frost. Fertilizing any later can interfere with the natural progression of dormancy and leave your lawn vulnerable in winter.

**Overseed for winter color:** Overseed a brown and dormant lawn with a cool-season grass, such as Perennial Ryegrass that stays green during winter. Wait until night temperatures drop and the warm-season grass starts losing color.

**Skip dethatching and aerating:** Dethatching and aerating can help strengthen and improve lawns, but they can be hard on grasses. Save these tasks for spring and early summer, when your warm-season lawn is actively growing and can bounce back fast.

**Let rainfall take over:** Continue watering as long as your lawn is growing, then let nature take over. If you overseed for winter color, then continue with a regular watering schedule.

**Hit weeds hard:** Actively-growing weeds are easy targets in dormant warm-season lawns. Spot treat lawn weeds with a post-emergent herbicide.

**Manage leaves:** Keep lawn grasses free of fallen leaves. Mulch small quantities, but remove heavy accumulations so grasses can breathe.