

The Ultimate Seasonal Fall Garden Prep Checklist

Category	Task	Why It Matters (The "Real Talk")	Done?
Cleanup	Pull diseased annuals	Leaving blighted vines is like inviting a vampire into your house. Trash them, don't compost.	[]
Cleanup	Remove "mummy" fruit	Those shriveled berries are fungus hotels. Get them out before they drop spores.	[]
Cleanup	Clear heavy leaf mats	Keeps the slugs from turning your garden beds into a winter resort.	[]
Soil Care	Get a Soil Test	Stop guessing. Adding the wrong stuff is a fast way to kill your spring seedlings.	[]
Soil Care	Top-dress with compost	Feed the microbes now so the dirt is "rich" and ready by March.	[]
Soil Care	Mulch bare ground	Prevents your good topsoil from washing away in the winter rain.	[]
Planting	Plant Garlic	The easiest "set it and forget it" crop. Plant 4-6 inches deep.	[]
Planting	Bury Spring Bulbs	Tulips and Daffodils need that cold sleep to bloom. Watch out for squirrels!	[]
Perennials	Divide "Bald" Clumps	If your Hostas have a hole in the middle, dig 'em up and split 'em.	[]
Perennials	Cut back "slimy" plants	Peonies and Hostas turn to mush; cut them to 2 inches above ground.	[]

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Infrastructure	Drain & Store Hoses	One frozen brass nozzle can explode. Don't ask me how I know.	[]
Infrastructure	Remove Spigot Timers	Plastic timers crack at the first frost. Bring them inside.	[]
Maintenance	Oil & Sharpen Tools	A little linseed oil stops the rust. A sharp blade stops plant disease.	[]
Maintenance	Mower Winterization	Change the oil and add fuel stabilizer. You'll thank me in April.	[]