

Schuylkill River Community Garden November 2 2019

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What to leave in the garden for winter

Until spring comes our way again, winter will play some tricks upon the garden but with a bit of preparation, we will be ready for them.

First- Clean up any diseased leaves, stems and plants. Don't compost these.

Remove surrounding soil if necessary for blight, phytophthora, scale are common

Save seed from vegetables like heirloom tomatoes, peppers, squash and lettuce

Plan for crop rotation, particularly for vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, broccoli

Make a careful layout for disease prevention for next season

Second- Remove any invasive plants or weeds

Know those weeds, perennial vs annual, deep roots vs shallow, edible vs awful

Purslane, garlic mustard, chickweed, dandelion are okay and edible

Thistle, mugwort, spurge, crabgrass, Datura (poisonous), definitely not okay

Take out - Stakes and fences, supports, cages, pots and hoses. Store hose nozzles indoors to prevent rust and deterioration of rubber rings

Plant Cover crops- Sow red or white clover for nitrogen fixing capabilities, daikon radish to break up hard clay or soil

Mulch with straw, set up a cold frame, protect soil from wind or water erosion

Before a hard freeze, apply wiltpruf, burlap on evergreens

Wrap tree trunks to thwart rabbit and deer damage. Be on the lookout for vole trails, mole mounds and damage from gnawing or scraping.

Take and Use Soil samples to compare notes from soil health in spring and at the end of season. Winter rain and snow can leach out nutrients. Wait to add proper amendments until spring. Only add what is recommended, not at random.

Leave crops such as carrots, parsnips, leeks, beets, onions, shallots, garlic, Swiss chard, kale, kohlrabi, turnips, radishes, mache, peas, spinach in raised beds and mulch for frost and cold temperature protection with whatever is available straw, pine needles, shredded paper (and wire to hold it in place), compost, etc. Make sure the soil is well drained, Dig during winter as needed.

Herbs can winter over too. Parsley, mint, sage, thyme, oregano, sorrel, (rosemary is tender)

Clean tools with a wire brush, sharpen blades and wipe with mineral oil. Store in a dry place.

Write in your garden journal before you forget all the details; note the names of seeds that were successful or flopped

Don't forget about **FLOWERS**. They are the pollinator attractors and necessary. Marigolds repel nematodes in soil if planted with tomatoes. Scented geranium repels mosquitoes. Borage and nasturtium are edible. Zinnias and cosmos for cutting.

Perennials can do good work in the garden if there is room in between vegetables. A raised bed dedicated to bees, butterflies and pollinating wasps and flies can enhance productivity for all garden beds.

Clean up time for perennials includes any with powdery mildew (phlox, Monarda, peony) but excludes seed heads such as those on echinacea, rudbeckia, aster, helianthus and solidago.

Put the garden to bed knowing the plants are pest and weed free and the soil is alive with microorganisms and healthy.

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