

Fall Chores

Gardening isn't just a spring time effort! Neither is work on our lawn and landscape. In fact, getting some work done now can actually help reduce the spring time load! We'll focus on garden chores next week. This week – landscape chores!

Heavy pruning of trees should always be left until spring, but sometimes, a fall 'trimming' can be of value. Leaves are still left on the tree and it's easier to pick out dead branches that can go ahead and be removed this fall. Further light trimming can be done, but only plan on removing ten percent or less of the plant during this time frame. Again, the best pruning occurs in the spring! Keep in mind as well that even light pruning of spring-blooming shrubs (lilac, forsythia, etc.) *will* reduce flowers for next year. Prune them after flowering.

Thinking of doing a rejuvenation pruning of deciduous shrubs – wait until spring! Junipers overgrown – maybe they just need to be removed! Even so, now is a good time to start planning for that spring pruning – and gaining a better understanding of how specific shrubs should be pruned – so you are prepared when weather allows.

Another fall chore that can be done now – with longer term benefits! – is to clean up iris beds. Fall is the time to remove any dead leaves and cut back any healthy leaves by half. While you are at it, go ahead and remove other garden debris from the bed as well.

Why? Two of our most common iris problems are a fungal disease known as iris leaf spot and an insect called iris borer. Neither of them are probably an issue right now – their damage is much more noticeable in the spring! – but now IS the time to start control measures. The iris leaf spot fungus and eggs of the iris borer both overwinter on old, dead leaves. Removing them now helps remove that 'source' of problems next spring.