

Winterizing Your Lawn the Right Way

Winter can be a treacherous time for your lawn. Take the steps to ensure that your grass will come back green and healthy once the winter snows melt away by winterizing your lawn this fall.

There are several important steps involved in winterizing your lawn. To simplify your life, we have compiled a comprehensive guide that will help keep your grass safe as the weather turns cold this winter season.

5 Steps for Properly Winterizing Your Lawn

- 1. Rake, Pick-up, and De-clutter.** It is very important to rake the leaves off your lawn so they do not smother your grass as they get wet and decompose. Next, you need to pick up any fallen branches and get rid of any other clutter lying around your yard. One forgotten Frisbee can leave an ugly dead spot in your lawn come spring.
 - If your leaves are less than 2 in. deep, feel free to mow them into your lawn for added nutrients. Set the blade on your [lawn mower](#) a bit higher than usual and slowly go over the lawn, chopping up the leaves and dropping them back on the grass as you go.
- 2. Aerate Your Lawn.** During the summer your lawn's growth really takes off, but it also suffers from compaction as more people are outside enjoying the weather on a regular basis. The compaction that results from this extra foot traffic hinders your grass's growth by compressing the spaces in the soil where oxygen can reach. Without proper amounts of oxygen your grass cannot perform its metabolic processes, and it will die.
 - Using a punch-core aerator that leaves little soil cores all over the grass will open up spaces in your soil again. You can then top dress these spaces with compost or sand to improve fertility and aeration.
- 3. Reseed.** After you've aerated your lawn, take this opportunity to reseed any areas that may need it. Fall is a great time for new grass seed to take root, and you will be pleased with your efforts once spring rolls around.
- 4. Fertilize - early and lightly.** The key to winter fertilizing is to do it early enough that the grass can build up its root system before winter. It is recommended that you fertilize in mid to late October, and it is best to use a quick-release, granular, nitrogen-based fertilizer. Nitrogen promotes healthy root growth and allows your lawn to store food needed throughout the winter. Granular fertilizer is best for fall fertilization, because it can penetrate thatch and sink into the soil more easily in cold weather.
 - The general rule of thumb is to apply no more than 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. The concentration of nutrients in the fertilizer you use will be listed on the label as a percentage of total weight.
- 5. Mow One Last Time.** Get out your [lawn mower](#) or [lawn tractor](#) for one last run before the cold weather arrives. Cut your grass to no shorter than about 2

inches. Grass that is too short will not be able to absorb nutrients during the winter.

Winterizing your lawn for the cold winter months ahead is a big job, but it is well-worth it when the snow clears away and you have healthy, beautiful green grass left behind. Use these five helpful tips and start winterizing your lawn today!