

NOVEMBER GARDEN 'TO DO' LIST

By Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardener

- ☐ **General Garden Care**—Empty or cover decorative pots and store in a dry place to avoid damage from freezing. Turn off water supply to the garden and disconnect hoses and accessories. Empty watering cans and hang garden hoses to drain for winter storage.
- ☐ **Stems & Seedheads**—Leave seedheads and stalks intact over the winter. Stems offer shelter for cavity dwelling native bees & beneficial insects and also collect snow to insulate and protect plants. Seedheads provide food for birds and winter interest for everyone.
- ☐ **Bulbs**—Plant spring flowering bulbs as long as the soil is workable. You may also have time to divide and replant overcrowded spring bulbs. Water bulbs after planting.
- ☐ **Trees and shrubs**—Check tree stakes and inspect any ties or wires to ensure they will not damage or girdle tree bark. Protect young trees and shrubs from damage with tree guards or chicken wire (60 cm/24" high) or by using wire baskets to cover very small trees or shrubs.
- ☐ **Bare Soil**—Protect bare soil from erosion and winter sun with a layer of organic matter, e.g., compost, leaves, straw or manure. [Avoid tilling](#) which destroys soil structure and soil organisms and encourages weeds to germinate.
- ☐ **Houseplants** —Check individual plants, **before** you water. If the soil feel dry/hard or the plant "feels light" for its size, it is likely time to water. If the soil feels cool/moist or the plant "feels heavy", wait and retest in a few days. Check for pests weekly & treat appropriately. Increase lighting in low light areas with [grow lights](#) or reflective surfaces. Grouping plants together and using a humidifier are now considered the most effective methods to ensure stable humidity.



[Goldenrod galls](#) contain yummy treats for birds!

During the winter, the diet of chickadees shifts to about 50% insects and spiders and 50% plant matter - primarily seeds and berries. Goldenrod galls are a great source of insect protein for them. Leaving seedheads also helps chickadees to find needed insects.

- ☐ **Lawn and Weeds**—Rake or "mow" leaves and remove to garden beds. Leave [some leaves uncut for beneficial insects](#) and pollinators who overwinter in leaf litter. Keep on weeding as long as the soil is workable. When mowing is done for the season, clean the mower and sharpen the blades.
- ☐ **Invasive Plants**—Remove any invasive plant seedlings like [multiflora rose](#), [common buckthorn](#) and [garlic mustard](#). MG Sean James shows you how to [remove larger weed tree seedlings](#) using needle nose pliers! Continue to hand pull, rake or cut off weeds at ground level with a sharp spade or garden tool. Remove and dispose of seed heads to reduce the seed bank in your soil.
- ☐ **Seeds and Winter Sowing**—Continue to collect seeds to sow or share. Here's another great [video](#) from MG Sean James to simplify growing your own plants this winter.
- ☐ **2026 Planning**—Take notes for next year. What needs to be moved, divided or pruned? Are plants located where you can enjoy their blooms? Do you have plants blooming spring through fall? What plants should be replaced to better support biodiversity? Read about the [2025 Monarch Award gardens](#) for inspiration and check our [resources section](#) to help you plan that perfect garden!
- ☐ Check our [October](#) newsletter for any garden jobs that you may have missed!

