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WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREENER HAMPTON ROADS

## **Tuck in your Lawn for Winter with Gardening Tips from askHRgreen.org**

(Hampton Roads, Va., Oct. 20, 2020) – The popularity of gardening and landscaping has exploded during the coronavirus pandemic. Limited in our activities, we turned to tomatoes, herbs and butterfly gardens to pass the time and calm our anxiety. But cooler days are on the horizon, and soon we will need to tuck in our lawns and gardens for a long winter’s nap. As we say goodbye to summer veggies and blooms, [askHRgreen.org](http://askHRgreen.org) has tips for preparing your yard for the winter season ahead.

- **Leaf it alone.** Rake or blow leaves into naturalized areas of your yard and flowerbeds. Fallen leaves create a sheltered, cozy ecosystem for overwintering wildlife and pollinators like turtles, butterflies, frogs, birds, and more.
- **Mulch mow.** This is just a fancy way to say, “Leave the clippings in your yard.” This applies to fall leaves too. When mulch mowed, leaves will decompose and boost your yard’s soil with beneficial nutrients.
- **Test your soil.** Before you apply fertilizer to your grass, [test your soil](#) first. For just \$10, you will save time, money and know exactly what amendments are needed, if any. You will also feel good about keeping excess chemicals out of the environment.
- **Know your grass.** If your soil test reveals your lawn needs additional nutrients, make sure you apply fertilizer at the right time. Fertilize warm season grasses (zoysia grass, Bermuda, St. Augustine) in the spring and cool season grasses (fescue and rye) in the fall.
- **Keep planting.** Fall is a great time to plant perennial trees and shrubs. Cool temps put less stress on a newly transplanted plant and allow it to establish strong roots before the next hot summer. Always consider planting [native plants](#), which require less fuss and have

plenty of wildlife benefits. Beautiful plants to consider include black gum trees, witch hazel, spicebush and sumac.

- **Create new paths and reflection areas.** The fall is an ideal time to look at the framework of your yard for planning new pathways. It can be as simple as creating a rustic path with pebbles or pine straw, or laying out a simple [backyard labyrinth](#) for quiet and reflection.

Just as we found solace in the garden with our summer planting frenzy, so too can we find comfort in a quiet winter landscape. As the writer William Blake said, “In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.” For more tips on all things green, visit [www.askHRgreen.org](http://www.askHRgreen.org)

**About askHRgreen.org** [askHRgreen.org](http://askHRgreen.org) is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like [askHRgreen.org](#) on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the “Let’s Talk Green” [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.