

Backyard Conversation Connecting Community + Conservation

Welcome to the Backyard Conversation! Each month we'll be sharing a conservation topic from a more personal viewpoint for our readers. To make this successful, I want to hear feedback from you! I'll include a poll at the bottom regarding our topic and share links to some of our partner organizations with similar messages. So, let's get to it!

Winter Backyard Conservation Prep



Do you hear what I hear? Winter is knocking on our doors, and now is the time to prep your yard for the snow and ice that's just around the corner. Properly managing your yard in late fall can save you time, money, and stress in the months to come.

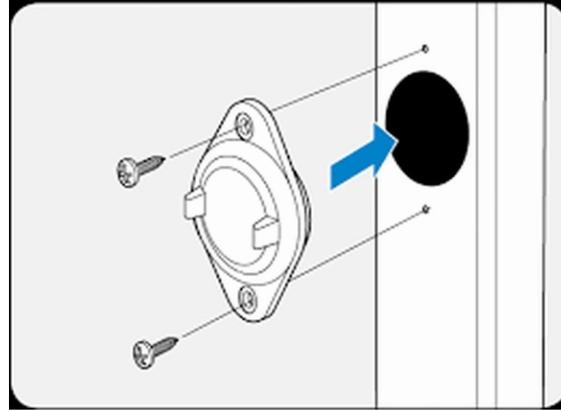
You might find yourself asking, what can I do to prepare for winter?

Water Sources

- Completely drain and disconnect rain barrels from the downspout and insert your winterization cap. Clean and store in garage/shed, or outside upside down or covered to prevent water accumulation.
- Disconnect all outdoor hoses and store them in a garage or basement.

A connected hose prevents water from fully emptying the spigot and freezing weather can crack interior pipes. Your hose's lining is also susceptible to damage especially if it is not completely empty.

- Clean out gutters from debris. Accumulated leaves, twigs, or moss will keep snow and ice from flowing freely, which could cause your gutters to freeze and possibly crack.



- Have an irrigation system? Make sure to properly drain and blow out the automated systems to avoid damage from freezing and thawing

Prepping your Trees & Shrubs

Trees can be planted in the fall up until the first hard frost. Make sure they are watered and well-insulated. We may have run out of time (that snow came fast!) But these tips still apply for Spring. Check out [Columbus Recreation and Parks' tree planting video!](#)



Collect some seeds from perennial plants (Make sure to leave some for wildlife to eat!) Share seeds with friends or give them as gifts!

Protect shrubs, trees, or newly planted perennials. Burlap barriers can help protect sensitive plants from winter elements and salt.

Free up your spring by pruning from mid-November to mid-March. [Learn more from Chicago Botanic Garden about winter pruning.](#) Remember to [leave stems for hibernating native bees.](#) Your “messy” garden is home to other overwintering creatures and passing birds looking to rest and eat.

Yard Work

- Insulate compost with dry leaves or straw. Your compost will continue slowly breaking down. Alternatively, you can spread your compost in your garden now and it should be completely broken down by spring.
- Mulch leaves onto your lawn in dime-sized pieces, add to your compost, or put out for yard waste collection. Reserve some whole leaf litter for overwintering pollinators. Revisit leaf management here: [Revisit our fall leaf management tips.](#)
- Drain your lawnmower's gas and consider getting the blades sharpened- as well as your other outdoor tools like pruners and shovels. For more mower management tips, read our [September Outreach Article.](#)
- Be ready for snow removal! Might be here before we know it. Have salt stored properly and have your shovels or snowblower on standby.



Check out this month's [Nature Scoop](#) for more great winter backyard conservation tips!

We enjoyed reading the parts on

- [Dead Trees Are Anything But Dead](#)
- [Winter Seeding Your Prairie](#)
- [Tips for Winter Bird Feeding](#)

Thanks Nature Scoop for a great article! [Click to read full article.](#)

POLL TIME

What did we miss? How do you prep for winter?

Fertilize the yard in late fall

Select

Keeping grasses tall

Select

Getting bird feeders ready

Select

Deer proofing my yard

Select

Getting my garden winter ready

Select

Other- Let us know!

Select

Here were the full results from last month's stormwater poll!

26.2%

Plan on using a Rain Barrel to catch Stormwater

35.5%

Will be planting Native Trees & Plants

14%

Have a plan to compost for soil amendment!

12.1%

Promise to help keep our storm drains clear

12.1%

Have other ideas! Can't wait to hear more about them

Next Month

December- Winter, Snow & Salt

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