

# Home | FALL 2023 Improvement

*Preparing your  
home for winter*

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## Home Improvement | FALL 2023

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# | Preparing your home for winter

**Geoff Saunders** | Cascade Home Center

As we come into fall and approach winter, it's a great time to come up with a game plan on ways to seal up and protect your home as temperatures drop. With some good weather still ahead of us, there is nothing like that peace of mind from getting the job done early. Here are some things to consider.

**1**

Make sure mercury type thermostats are upgraded to digital. Talk about saving money! Digital thermostats are able to react much quicker to temperature fluctuations and maintain consistency, so your heat source doesn't have to work as hard. That's where the money is saved.



**2**

Avoid broken pipes from freezing by using pipe insulation. It's been said the least favorite winter festivity is replacing a broken pipe in the coldest part of winter. Don't even risk it. Wrapping up those pipes with insulation and some duct tape is inexpensive and easy.



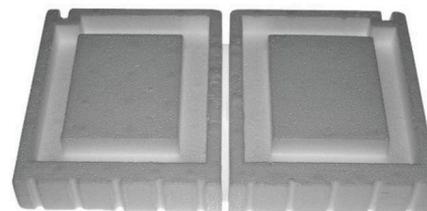
**3**

Why not put faucet covers on all of the faucets around the house? It's a Styrofoam dome that goes over the faucet and sucks up tight to the house. Who wants an icicle to freeze back into the pipe and potentially burst? No fun!



**4**

Don't forget the simplicity of foundation vent covers. These are rectangular Styrofoam blocks that plug up foundation vents to keep cold air out and warmer air in. Another great way to save money by not spending a lot of money.



**5**

Now for some fun stuff called Great Stuff! This is expanding foam that comes from an aerosol can. Anywhere there are gaps around pipes or electrical boxes, this expanding foam won't quit until it's airtight. Cold air isn't the only thing it keeps out, the critters like spiders and mice want to get out of the cold too!

It won't hurt to consider some extra precautions where applicable. Generators are becoming more and more popular. That means also less and less available when they are needed the most. Think about it.

These preventative measures are a great defense against the cold and make the home more efficient. Easy and cheap too. Put these projects on your calendar early so you can sit back and relax in the warmth of your home this winter.



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# Curb appeal during fall & winter

**Sarah Owre** | HomeSmart Broker-Realtor

Curb appeal during the fall and winter months can prove challenging in Oregon. But, it's still possible to make your home look inviting and attractive. Whether you are looking to sell, or add that magazine worthy curb appeal, here are a few ideas to help you through the fall and winter months here in Oregon.

## 1. Maintain Landscaping

Even though many plants go dormant in winter, it's important to keep the landscape tidy. Trim any dead branches or shrubs and remove fallen leaves. A well-maintained yard gives a positive first impression. Additionally, adding ever-green plants such as holly, boxwood or spruce can add instant visual interest. Since these plants maintain their green color throughout the winter it also adds a bit of color and seasonal charm.

## 2. Clean and maintain exterior surfaces

Fall and Winter can leave dirt, grime and salt residue on your home's exterior. Regularly clean the siding, windows and gutters to keep them looking fresh. Repair any damaged siding or peeling paint so the wet weather doesn't do additional harm.

## 3. Keep the entryway welcoming

Make sure your front door is clean, in good condition and well-painted. Fall is a great time to touch up your front door with paint as the weather is cooler. Don't forget to add a welcome mat for the new season, a decorative wreath to your front door and consider placing a potted plant with seasonal plants such as mums in the fall or pansies in the winter.

## 4. Upgrade outdoor lighting

With shorter daylight hours, good outdoor lighting is essential. Consider repainting or replacing exterior light fixtures that are showing their age. Consider installing solar or wired pathway and landscape lighting during the fall and winter months! Now is a great time to find these items on sale as stores clearance out summer lighting.



## 5. Add outdoor seating

We often bring our outdoor seating inside for winter, but if you have a covered porch or patio, keep the furniture out. Adding a cozy blanket and pillows creates a welcoming and inviting space for guests or potential buyers to imagine themselves enjoying the outdoors even in the winter.

Remember, as the saying goes, "you never get a second chance to make a first impression!" Don't let the change in weather deter you from creating instant curb appeal.



Let me assist you in adding curb appeal to get you the sale you want!



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Broker-Realtor

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## BACKYARDING ON A BUDGET:

# Six money-saving hacks for fall

Fall is an opportune time to set up your backyard for year-round success. Work put into landscaping in the fall determines the quality of the space for all of your family's backyarding activities, from family football games at Thanksgiving and Easter egg hunts in the spring, to taking your office to the back patio and meditation in a backyard hammock.

"Work in your yard, and it will work for you. That's always been our motto, but it's particularly important to follow this credo in the fall when we can make the most impact in our yards," said Kris Kiser, President & CEO of the TurfMutt Foundation, which encourages people to care for and use the green space around them. "You don't have to break the bank to create a backyard that will serve many purposes for your family year-round."

Here are six money-saving hacks for creating the backyard of your dreams from the TurfMutt Foundation:

### 1. Clean out flower beds & add mulch

Simply cleaning out your flower beds (use a leaf blower to make quick work of the task) and adding a fresh layer of mulch works wonders. New mulch not only holds weeds at bay, it also helps retain moisture around plants, trees and shrubs.

### 2. Prune bushes & trees

Trimming bushes, shrubs and trees is another inexpensive way to make a big impact in your yard's aesthetic. Use a chainsaw, trimmer or hedger to remove dead or dying branches and stems. This preserves the health of the main branch and improves the shape of the plant. Pruning also encourages plants to flower later.

### 3. Keep grass mowed and weeded

Regular lawn mowing helps your grass stay healthy and strong and improves the overall appearance of your yardscape without spending much money. In the fall, cut your lawn shorter than



during the rest of the growing season and continue to mow until your grass goes into hibernation for the winter.

#### 4. Pick perennials

Perennials – those cold-hardy plant species that will return again in the spring – are a smart money choice because you only have to buy them once to enjoy them for years to come.

#### 5. Plant climate-appropriate species

Native plants – those that occur naturally in your region – are a smart buy any time of the year. They are more likely to thrive in your micro-climate without much maintenance or watering. They are also better for local wildlife and pollinators and help preserve the balance of the natural ecosystem.

#### 6. Look for deals

Many nurseries and home improvement stores offer end-of-season sales on landscaping essentials from plants to outdoor power equipment (mowers, trimmers, leaf blowers, etc.) that make even big backyarding tasks easier.

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# Five garden winterizing tips

**Nicole Sanchez** | OSU Extension Service

Cool temperatures, shorter daylight hours- outdoor gardening season is reaching its conclusion. On social media, new gardeners are asking about winterizing, positioning gardens for continued health and beauty over the winter months.

For ornamental gardens and foundation plantings, it's time to complete a few tasks, but heavy pruning of "woodies"- trees and shrubs - is best left to late winter. Pruning now might encourage new growth to later be damaged by frost. Exceptions include dead, damaged or diseased material - the risks of not removing these are greater than that of potentially damaged regrowth. Most fall work in the ornamental landscape is focused on the maintenance of herbaceous material.

## Cutting back perennials

As perennials like Shasta daisies, rudbeckias, mums and salvias finish blooming and stalks dry out, these should be cut back to tidy the garden. Cutting back is easier in fall when the stems are upright: winter snows mash them in all directions making removal a lengthier process. Previous wisdom has been to cut these stems back nearly to the ground: newer research suggests that hollow stemmed perennials, once cut back, can serve as nesting sites for native bees.

Few bees fly after hard frost kills everything but rabbitbrush. This technique of providing bee habitat may work better on early blooming perennials, stems of which would be available nesting material for a longer period. This topic is ripe for further research. Whether cut ground level, or at about two feet to provide pollinator habitat, cut back perennials for the winter season and remove dead leaves and stems.

## Mulch

A good application of mulch helps regulate soil temperature and provides insulation to the root zone of plants. This is especially helpful for plants with lots of roots close to the soil surface. Many novice gardeners are surprised to learn that a cycle of frost/thaw, frost/thaw can be more damaging to plants than temperatures that get cold and stay cold.

The warm/cold cycle causes some plants to heave from the soil, can cause roots to dry out, and is detrimental to trees. A layer of 3-4 inches of natural products like bark nuggets or

shredded bark is commonly recommended. Mulch should not be piled, volcano style, at deeper levels around the trunks of trees.

## Dig and Divide

Once plants have been cut back and cleaned up, it's sometimes obvious that one plant has out-grown its designated location, or is large enough to make into multiple plants to fill in other garden spots. Fall is a great time to divide most perennials. Plants that have a rosette growth habit (all leaves seeming to originate from one central point) are generally not conducive to dividing, but numerous others benefit from division.

Often forgotten at division time are the bulbs- often most traces of their spring beauty are gone by fall. Bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths should be divided every three to five years by digging them up and removing "daughters" from the main bulb to be replanted separately. There's no one schedule that fits all plants and gardens, but failure to divide bulbs periodically leads to ever smaller and smaller blooms and weak plants struggling to compete with each other.

## Protect tree trunks

Young and recently planted trees are especially prone to trunk damage when there are mild days and drastically colder nights. On sunny days, sunny sides of tree trunks thaw differently from the shady sides, leading to cracking and splitting on the sunny side.

Small cracks allow entry of bacteria, fungi and insects, which make larger problems. Strong winds add further damage. A variety of tree tape and plastic, coiled protectors are available. Now is the time to apply these if your tree(s) are vulnerable.

## Remove weeds

They might look dead and harmless now, but the roots of perennial weeds are growing underground during winter, just like the roots of desirable plants. Tops may contain thousands of seeds, a deposit for next year's weed bank.

If fall brings rain, weeds are much easier to pull. For a few stubborn taprooted weeds, fall is a good time to apply herbicide as the plant is pulling nutrients into the root for winter.

*Heavy pruning of "woodies" - trees and shrubs - is best left to late winter*



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# How to prepare physically and financially for severe weather

## (StatePoint)

Severe weather can have a sizable impact on your home and your savings. Taking steps to prepare can help you maintain peace of mind should a hazard impact you. Freddie Mac offers the following preparation tips for homeowners:

## Protect Your Investment

A home insurance policy is an important layer of protection, generally providing you with the funds needed to repair a damaged property to its condition prior to an incident. Here, coverage can vary greatly depending on the company and plan you choose. To avoid surprises, it's important to review your policy carefully and make sure you understand what is and is not covered. For example, flooding is not generally covered by homeowner's insurance, so if you live in an area at risk of flooding, consider a separate flood insurance policy. Working with your insurance agent or broker can help you determine the types of plans and coverage that make sense for your budget, property and possessions.

Keep in mind that after a disaster strikes, you will need to list your possessions and verify any losses for an insurance claim. Taking a home inventory beforehand will make the process much easier.

## Establish a Saving Strategy

Create an emergency fund with a goal of saving enough money for three to six months of regular expenses. It's best to keep your emergency fund separate from your regular savings account unless there's an extreme need. While this can be challenging for any family, households that have emergency budgets in place tend to be better prepared to face disaster. Any resources you can put away will help you be more resilient if the time comes.

## Secure Your Home

Regular home maintenance can help protect against the dangers of natural disasters, such as flooding and hurricane-force winds. Cleaning gutters and drains, for example, can prevent water from collecting around your home. You should also be sure you have a sump pump in good working order, and that your foundation and roof are in good condition. If a storm is in the forecast, clear your lawn of items that may be damaged, destroyed, lost, or cause damage to your home. You should also cover windows and shut off utilities. Many of these precautions can also protect against tornadoes, which can develop quickly and often arrive without warning.



## Make Safety Upgrades

Before buying a particular house, you may want to consider the area's history of natural disasters, and take stock of the home to ensure it's up to code and has the safety features needed to protect you and your family.

Whether you're a current or prospective homebuyer, you can reference information provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (known as FEMA) to help you assess which hazards could impact your home, and identify relevant safety upgrades that can strengthen its defenses. For example, earthquake damage may be mitigated by installing flexible gas line connections to prevent leaks and fires and by securing exterior structures like decks, porches, garages and carports. Homes at risk of storm surge could benefit from reinforced garage doors that can withstand water and high winds, storm shutters, high-impact glass windows, and flood-resistant insulation and flooring.

Depending on the scope of renovations, you may consider taking out a loan to cover the costs. There are a variety of refinance products available that allow you to leverage your home's value to fund renovations. Talk to your lender to find the right financing option for you.

*Natural disasters are hard to predict. But being prepared can help you weather the storm, both physically and financially.*



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# Budget-friendly outdoor projects for any DIYer

## StatePoint

Want to transform your outdoor space while saving money? There are plenty of hands-on projects you can do yourself to eliminate expensive labor costs. The following ideas can be tailored to your budget and personal preferences:

### Install a Party Pad

Make your backyard more fun and functional with a low-maintenance patio for entertaining and relaxing. Based on your budget and experience level, there are a variety of styles and materials to choose from, such as brick, concrete and stone. You'll also need gravel to create a sturdy foundation.

If you're building on an existing lawn, clear out the grass and dirt first and dig an area deep enough, so the new surface will be even with the ground. Once you've prepped the ground and poured the gravel, use sand to hold the blocks in place and fill any gaps between the blocks once the layout is complete. Search online for step-by-step installation instructions and use a project calculator to determine the cost.

### Increase Seating Capacity

A built-in seating wall near a fire pit, pool or patio offers more places to lounge and adds depth to the space. There are plenty of DIY-friendly materials to build with, including interlocking concrete blocks, which won't need to be recut and are heavy enough to stay in place without cement, or larger, flat stones that look more natural and can be laid in various ways.

If you use concrete blocks, add capstones as top piece to give the design a finished look. Watch tutorials online before starting the project for inspiration and to ensure you complete all the necessary steps.

### Repair Over Replace

Fix up something old to make it new. If you have an above-ground pool or spa with a slow leak, easily repair it with the highly-rated T-Rex Waterproof Tape. The tape has a waterproof backing enhanced with R-Flex Technology for greater durability. It's also UV-resistant, can stretch up to 700% of its original length and is strong enough to be used underwater.

Locate the leak and then measure and cut a piece of tape with scissors (this tape is too tough to tear by hand). Remove the liner from the back and apply it to the crack to form a leak-proof seal. Press down firmly and smooth any creases by hand.



### Hide Outdoor Eyesores

A privacy screen is an easy project for beginner DIYers and will hide unsightly air conditioning units, garbage bins and utility boxes. You'll need weather-resistant wood slats, like cedar wood, fence posts, a drill, screws and paint or stain.

Use your "eyesore" to determine how tall to make the screen. Then, anchor fence posts into the ground and drill your first slat about an inch above the ground. Continue adding boards all the way up. For air conditioning units, leave space between each slat to ensure proper air circulation. Add a finish—dark for a modern style or clear for a natural look—and enjoy.

### Give it a Glow

Use lighting to give your backyard a bistro-like atmosphere. Rather than using a drill to hang solar or string lights, use transparent, double-sided T-Rex Clear Mounting Tape to permanently and discreetly decorate.

Whether placing the lights across wooden beams or on brick or vinyl fencing, make sure the surface is clean and dry before applying the tape. Stick one side to the surface and the other to mount the lights. The adhesive will build over time, achieving full strength after a 24-hour period.

Once you tackle these budget-friendly DIY projects, you'll be ready to relax in your outdoor oasis.



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