Fall lawn tips that keep your yard looking great year-round

(BPT) - Falling temperatures and shorter days don't mean you can retire from lawn care for the year. In fact, the fall season is a critical time to nourish lawns and care for plants so they can survive winter and emerge even more vibrant when next spring arrives.

Before you store your lawn and garden supplies, consider these fall lawn tips that keep your yard looking great year-round:

Fertilize

Your lawn may not look like it's doing much above ground during cool months, but below ground root systems continue to grow. That's why most lawn care professionals recommend fertilizing once or twice in the fall - grass will store and use the extra boost of nutrients throughout winter. Fertilizers high in nitrogen are ideal for fall feedings.

Sweep

Leaves and other foliage left on the ground can rot and deprive grass and other plants of moisture and sunlight. If you dread raking, a blower/vac is the ideal tool. Go eco-friendly with a rechargeable battery-powered option from Greenworks. With no cords and an easy push start, the innovative 40V Brushless Blower/ Vacuum blows up to 185 mph, plus it can vacuum four bags of leaves on a single charge.

Water

Watering during fall is important to foster root growth and give plants a healthy drink before winter arrives. If you're not experiencing at least 1 inch of rainfall a week, supplement with a sprinkler. Continue the same eco-friendly watering strategies you used throughout summer, such as watering in the mornings to reduce evaporation.

Seed

Have a few sparse areas in your yard? Fall is a great season for grass seed to germinate due to the cool, moist weather. Plus, because most seasonal birds have left, the seed is less vulnerable to being eaten. Over-seeding now not only fills in open areas, but it increases grass density to help prevent weeds next year. Loosen and prepare the soil, choose a high quality grass seed and water the area plenty so seeds reach maturity before winter.

Trim

Fall is a good time to trim trees and shrubbery before the harsh weather of winter hits. Save money with the DIY approach. Don't be intimidated by chainsaws - because the easy-to-use GreenWorks 40V Brushless Chain Saw uses a rechargeable battery, there's no gas or oil to mix. No gas means no excessive heat or vibration - the saw runs up to 65 percent cooler and vibrates up to 70 percent less than comparable gas saws. In addition, the innovative brushless motor provides this saw with enough power to cut a cord of wood on a single battery charge.

Aerate

Aerating your lawn in the fall helps to open compacted soil and break down thatch that built up over the summer. The small soil plugs removed by the aerator loosen the ground so oxygen and water can better reach the grass roots. Aerators are available for rent at most rental stores and the job can typically be done in a few hours, depending on yard size.

Mow

As the weather cools, grass slowly goes dormant. Before winter hits, continue to mow as needed. When your lawn seems to have almost completely slowed its growth rate, mow one final time for the year, but set your mower at a higher height. This helps keep grass healthy until warm weather returns. Recommended mower heights for a final mow are 2 to 2.5 inches.

Rather than retreating from the crisp fall air, use the time to enjoy the beauty of Mother Nature while helping keep your yard looking its best. A few simple steps now will help your lawn look great today and into next year.

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