



# your



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

## Preparing Your Lawn for Winter

**A**s the season changes, it's time to prepare your lawn for the colder months ahead. If you want to ensure a beautiful and healthy lawn once spring arrives, then it is vital that you protect it from wintertime damage.

### Fertilize your lawn

Fall is the best time to fertilize your lawn. Give your lawn one last feed before winter using a slow-release fertilizer loaded with nitrogen and potassium, providing your lawn with necessary nutrients to support healthy root development.

healthy growth and to ensure that the lawn can breathe properly. This will aid in absorbing water and nutrients, allowing your grass to grow deeper roots. Aeration also helps to keep the soil loose and promotes better drainage. This will help to prevent the formation of undesirable conditions such as snow mold.

### Get rid of leaves and debris

If there's snow forecasted in your area, it's important to remove leaves, debris and other organic matter from your lawn. Fallen leaves and debris, if left unattended, can suffocate the lawn and lead to fungus growth.

temperature gets too low. Also, ensure that your lawnmower is set to the right height—about 2 inches. If the grass is left too long during winter, it can attract mice and other small rodents, which can ruin the lawn by tunneling underneath it and eating it.

### Aerate your lawn

Aerating your lawn is necessary to maintain

### Mow your lawn

Make sure you mow your lawn before the

### Weed and water

Although cold-tolerant grasses are approaching



dormancy in winter, they need sufficient water in their roots to winter over successfully. Also, eliminate any ragweed (which will reseed in the fall) and dandelions (which seed in spring before you're prepared to do battle).

## Benefits of a Heated Garage

Have you ever considered the benefits of having a heated garage? The positives are plenty:

- ▶ A heated garage can help keep your vehicle warm, not only for your own comfort but also to protect the car from frozen oil or fuel lines and body rust.
- ▶ You can avoid having your engine idle to warm it up, saving fuel, reducing pollution and eliminating a carbon monoxide risk in the space (especially problematic with an attached garage).
- ▶ An additional heated space can be used for a workshop, art studio or home gym.
- ▶ If your garage is attached to your home, heating it will create a buffer zone against the cold entering the house.

Here are three ways to ensure that your garage stays warm, even during the coldest months:

**1 Insulate your garage**  
Insulation is key when it comes to keeping the heat inside your garage. Without proper insulation, all the warm air produced by your heating source will escape through the walls and ceiling, leaving you with a cold and inefficient space. You can purchase foam board, fiberglass batting or spray foam insulation. Your choice will depend on the size and shape of your garage, as well as your budget.

**2 Upgrade your heating system**  
If you're looking for an energy-efficient option, consider installing an electric radiant heating system that works through heat transfer. You can also install a furnace or a boiler that heats your garage through forced air or hot water.

**3 Use portable heaters**  
If you only use your garage for a few hours each day, consider using a portable heater instead of installing a permanent heating system. These heaters are easy to move and cost-effective.

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# Fireplace Cleaning This Fall

**T**here's nothing quite like the warmth and ambiance of a roaring fireplace, both indoors and outdoors, in the chilly autumn months. But before you light that first fire of the season, you'll want to make sure your fireplace is clean, safe and ready to go. Whether you're firing up an old wood-burning hearth or about to switch on a gas-powered insert, here are some tips for fall fireplace cleaning to help you prepare for the season ahead.

**Start with a good sweep:** Before you do anything else, you'll want to give your fireplace a good sweeping. Clear out all the ashes, soot and debris using a dustpan and brush, ash vac or shop vac. Be sure to wear a mask and gloves to protect yourself.

**Get your chimney inspected:** Your chimney is an important part of your fireplace system, and it should be inspected annually to ensure that it's structurally sound and free from any creosote or debris buildup that could cause a fire hazard.

**Check your firebrick and grates:** Are your firebrick and grates in good condition? Damaged or worn-out firebrick can cause hot spots or even a chimney fire, while rusty or warped grates can obstruct airflow and reduce the efficiency of your fire.

**Clean your glass doors and screens:** If you have glass doors or screens on your fireplace, now's the time to clean them inside and out. Use a glass cleaner or a mixture of white vinegar and water to wipe away any grime or buildup.

**Clean gas fireplace inserts:** Turn off the gas and wait a few minutes for it to leave the pipes. Take the gas logs outside and brush them down with a soft paintbrush to remove any debris. Vacuum off lava rocks, covering the nozzle with cheesecloth if some stones are small enough to be sucked into the vacuum. Vacuum out the firebox, then replace the rocks and logs in their original positions to ensure proper function. It's a good idea to have an HVAC pro inspect the fireplace insert and chimney annually.



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