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Tips for Fall Yard Clean Up

A proper fall yard cleanup puts you ahead of the game when spring arrives.

Fall is here, which means it's time to clean up your yard and prepare for the cool days ahead. A little work now will lead to a big payoff when spring arrives.

The most efficient way to start is at the top, by pruning trees, trimming hedges and cleaning gutters. After that, work your way down. Protect your deck by cleaning and staining it, close the pool and start composting.

Finish the ground with a little lawn maintenance, garden sweep and overall assessment. Use the following checklist to make your annual fall yard cleanup easy and enjoyable:

Clean Your Gutters

Now is a good time to clear leaves and debris from your gutters. Ensure proper drainage of your roof to avoid costly leaks before the cooler wet weather hits. Use a small garden trowel to scoop out the gunk. If the dirt is solidified, soak it first to loosen it, then use a garden hose to rinse it out through the downspouts. If there's a clog, use a plumber's auger to free it.

Prune Trees and Hedges

Trim overgrown areas and remove dead limbs before they weaken and fall under winter snows. Thinning your trees now may save you a roof repair bill in the future. For higher or heavier tree cleanup, use a chainsaw.

Protect Your Deck

With summer traffic in your backyard slowing, now is a great time to use a pressure washer to clean the mould, mildew and grime from your deck before sealing it. Once your deck is clean and dry, protect it from costly moisture damage during the cooler wet months ahead.

Start a Compost Pile

A great way to reduce your impact on the environment is to compost. When clearing the garden, remove all blackened plants such as zinnias, petunias and marigolds and add them to your compost. Remove plant stems on any perennials that may have had diseased foliage such as peonies and lilies. Put them in garbage bags or cans to avoid spreading weeds and disease. Good sanitation now will result in fewer problems next spring.

Till Your Vegetable Garden

It's time to clean and clear your vegetable garden. Dig out old vegetable plants and add them to your compost pile. Till the plot thoroughly, then add several inches of compost to nurture the soil for spring planting. Work the compost into the soil to help it breathe and allow rainwater to pass through more easily.

Get the Grime Off Your Tools

As the gardening season ends give your tools a polish.

- Spend a few minutes wiping them clean to remove debris and dirt
- Apply a light layer of oil to keep them from rusting during the cold season so they'll be ready to use in the spring

Do a Little Lawn Maintenance

Fall lawn care will yield maximum results in the spring.

- Aerate compacted soil or use a rake to remove thatch
- Use fall lawn fertilizer to improve soil conditions for when spring growth begins.
- Mow grass blades no more than 1/3 of its length at once.
- To clear dried grass clippings, leaves or dirt from your driveway, patio or deck, use a blower.

Give Your Garden Bed a Clean Sweep

As the growing season ends, give your flower garden a clean sweep and prepare it for spring. Spent plants, debris and weeds can be a welcoming and warm environment for fungi and bacteria to grow and a great place for insects to lay eggs. Clearing it now will save you costly springtime repairs. Once your garden is clean, feed your soil by adding fertilizer, compost and organic topsoil; use a tiller to mix it together. When you're finished, cover the garden with pine-bark mulch to prepare it for next spring.

Assess Lighting Needs

Now that your yard is in tip-top shape and clear of debris, take a look around. Inspect your outdoor lights to ensure that they're working properly and replace those that aren't. If you don't have landscape lighting, now's a great time to add it to your space. As the days get shorter, the right lighting can bring your garden to life at night. Go for low-voltage or solar lighting systems, since they're an affordable and earth-friendly way to illuminate your yard, walkway, patio, driveway and garden.

Pool Maintenance

Closing the swimming pool for the season is a great weekend project:

- Clean the bottom with a pool vacuum hose
- Use a net to remove floating debris and leaves
- Balance the water chemistry
- Shock your pool and add an algaecide
- Lower the water level to 4-6 inches below the skimmer and close valves
- Drain the lines and plug them with winterizing plugs
- Fill the skimmer line with antifreeze and place a skimmer guard in the skimmer to prevent costly damage from ice forming
- Protect your pool with a winter cover

<https://www.homedepot.ca/en/home/ideas-how-to/project-guides/lawn-and-garden/fall-yard-cleanup-checklist.html>

London-St. Thomas Market Continues at a Healthy Pace



The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) announced that home sales in the London-St. Thomas area continued at a healthy pace in August, with 892 homes exchanging hands. "Compared to August 2016, which holds an unprecedented record, the August 2017 numbers represent a slight decrease in homes sales activity. However, if you look at the historical data, last month turns out to be the best August for our REALTOR® Members since 2005," said the LSTAR President. "Overall, 2017 remains an incredible year for real estate across London and St. Thomas and we expect sales activity to stay fairly strong for the remainder of 2017." "With real estate impacting so many areas of our community, such as contractors, trades, home stores and small businesses, it plays a significant role to building the local economy," said LSTAR President. "

September 5, 2017 - London & St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®.

Breakdown of August Residential Sales

Type	Units Sold	Average Price
2 Storey	208	\$477,904
Bungalow	165	\$251,336
Ranch	95	\$377,486
Townhouse Condo	95	\$210,114
High Rise Apt. Condo	46	\$215,835

2017 Average Prices (YTD)

Type	Average Price	Increase from 2016
Detached	\$354,968	20.3%
Condo	\$233,036	15.7%
Total Residential	\$329,745	18.9%

St. Thomas saw a total of 63 homes sold, up 1.6% from the same time last year. The average home price in St. Thomas was \$270,738 up 1.4% from the previous month.

Tips For Pricing Your Home Right

Setting the listing price for your home requires many considerations. If you go too high, your house may not receive interest from prospective buyers - even if your home is above the standard of the neighbourhood. If you price too low, you may sell, but perhaps not for the price you hoped.

Selecting the ideal pricing strategy for your particular area is crucial to how well you'll do. In doing so, consider the following:

Decide when to sell. Many homeowners will lean toward the spring and fall markets, but don't discount January, February, and November. Buyers can be motivated at those times as the number of homes for sale often decreases. Supply and demand will largely dictate the price you set for your home.

Consider the competition in your neighbourhood and similar neighbourhoods in your area. If there are many homes for sale

at a given time, perhaps you will do better to list yours later.

Pricing a house is never an exact science. To arrive at a fair asking price for your home, ask your Royal LePage Realtor® who has specific knowledge of your area and supplement that opinion with your own research.

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Deep Dish Apple Pie

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)
- 1/4 cup packed light-brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbs granulated sugar
- 8 Tbs (1 stick) unsalted butter, cold, cut into small cubes
- 1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats (not quick-cooking)
- 3 lbs apples, such as Empires, Gala or Braeburn, peeled, cored and cut into 1/2 inch chunks
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon



Cook's Note:

Best served still warm from the oven, topped with a scoop of vanilla, cinnamon or caramel ice cream

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, mix together flour, brown sugar, salt and 2 tablespoons granulated sugar. Cut butter into flour, using a pastry blender or two knives, until mixture is the texture of coarse meal. Add oats, and use your hands to toss and squeeze mixture until large, moist clumps form. Transfer to freezer to chill while you prepare apples.
2. In another large bowl, toss apples with lemon juice, cinnamon and remaining 1/2 cup granulated sugar. Transfer to a shallow 2-quart baking dish, and sprinkle with topping mixture. Place baking dish on a rimmed baking sheet, and bake until golden and bubbling, 55 to 65 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes before serving.

<http://www.marthastewart.com/316288/apple-crisp>

The secret to a crunchy, chunky topping is working the oat mixture into large clumps with your hands - this helps the topping hold together atop the apples while toasting to a golden brown.