

Essential yard clean up duties for when the weather turns cooler

As the weather begins to chill, now is a great time to prepare the home and welcome the coming winter. Enjoy the outdoors and make a day of it. The Home Depot Canada offers winterization products and tips necessary for every homeowner.

Don't leave the leaves: Leaves left on the lawn may smother your lawn, so it's a good time to pick up the rake. Once leaves are piled up and disposed of, consider mowing the lawn for one last time. "Follow municipal guidelines for curb side leaf disposal," says John Mansz, The Home Depot Canada's gardening expert. "Better yet, use an electric blower-vacuum to break down leaves to make excellent mulch for your flower, perennial and shrub beds."

Store away the lawnmower: Gas mowers should be drained of gasoline. If you choose to keep the gas in, be sure to add fuel stabilizer. Oil should be replaced and spark plugs removed. Be ready for next year's spring grass and sharpen the blades and apply a thin coat of lubricating oil.

Fertilize your lawn: Apply a fall fertilizer any time from September up until freezing, to ensure you have a lush, green lawn in the spring.

Let the water run dry: Residual water in outdoor hoses may freeze if not drained properly, possibly causing cracks and holes. To drain hoses effectively, uncoil them, laying them on a downward slope of a hillside or driveway. Be sure to turn off the water to outdoor sources as well. "Don't forget to have your underground irrigation sys-



tems 'blown out' by a professional if they are not self draining," says Mansz.

Clean your garden tools: Garden tools should be cleaned for winter storage to prevent rust. Clean soil from tools and oil tools with movable parts.

Check gutters and downspouts: Remove leaves and debris from these locations, as a build up can potentially cause water to seep through walls.

Test your snowblower: After a few months of idleness, be sure to check the snowblower before the first storm hits. It's also a good idea to locate your shovels, stock up on ice melt, oil and gas, and other Canadian winter survival accessories. You never know when the snow or ice may suddenly arrive.

For more do-it-yourself tips, visit www.homedepot.ca or The Home Depot in your community.

—News Canada

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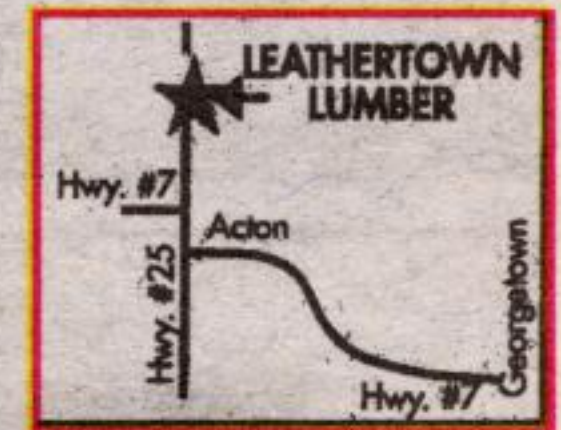
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