

Fall Home & Garden



Bird Feeders

Autumn is a perfect time to focus on providing nourishment and support for our feathered friends.

Bird feeders play a crucial role in attracting and sustaining birds during the fall and winter months when natural food sources become scarce. Many people set up bird feeders not only to benefit the birds, but so they can enjoy watching them through their windows.

PUTTING OUT BIRD FEEDERS

Before setting up your fall bird feeders, inspect them for any damage or wear from previous use. Look for cracks, loose parts or signs of deterioration. Clean the feeders thoroughly with warm water and mild soap, ensuring there is no mold or residue. Rinse and air dry the feeders before filling them with fresh food.

Different bird species have different feeding preferences. Select feeders that accommodate the types of birds you want to attract. Common feeder types include hopper feeders, tube feeders, suet feeders and platform feeders. Consider using a variety of feeder styles to cater to a wider range of bird species. Birds & Blooms recommends using more hopper feeders in the fall and avoiding tray or platform feeders. The latter



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can collect snow and moisture and ruin the food. They also recommend putting out twice as many bird feeders if you are in the North as birds are migrating and there are many more mouths to feed.

Sugar-water feeders for hummingbirds are good to have out in the fall as the birds are migrating, but should be taken down and cleaned after the last of the orioles and hummingbirds have flown through on their way south.

BIRD FEED

To attract a diverse array of birds, provide a mix of seed types in your feeders. Black oil sunflower seeds are popular as they are nutrient-rich and attractive to a wide variety of birds. Other foods to consider include nyjer (thistle) for finches, millet for ground-feeding birds and safflower seeds, which are less favored by squirrels. Suet cakes or blocks can attract woodpeckers and other insect-loving birds.

Birds & Blooms recommends

that people in northern areas use suet exclusively and just a few types of birdseed. They also suggest storing bird food in waterproof garbage cans with bricks or bungee cords holding down the lids to keep out raccoons and squirrels.

It also might be time to buck long-held habits of raking leaves or mowing dandelions. Letting dandelions grow in the fall (and the winter if the climate allows) gives birds something to eat. Creating brush piles with fallen leaves protects

ground-feeding birds from predators and gives them somewhere warm to stay. They also attract insects that birds eat.

Consider including a water source near your bird feeders. This can be a bird bath, a shallow dish or a small fountain. Ensure the water remains clean and unfrozen during colder months by using a heated bird bath or regularly changing the water.

PLACEMENT AND MONITORING

Strategically place your bird feeders near trees and shrubs that can provide cover and perching spots for birds. Position feeders away from windows to prevent bird collisions. It's also helpful to place feeders in a quiet area, away from high traffic or noise, so birds feel safe and comfortable while feeding.

Monitor your bird feeders to ensure they are well-stocked and clean. Refill feeders as needed, especially during periods of heavy bird activity or when food supplies are running low. Clean the feeders periodically to prevent the spread of diseases and remove any moldy or spoiled food.

As fall progresses into winter, be mindful of changing bird preferences. Some bird species may switch their feeding habits, relying more on suet or high-energy food sources. It is a good time to add extra suet feeders or provide food options that cater to the specific bird species that visit your area during the colder months.

Buying Home Appliances

September is an opportune time to buy home appliances.

This month brings a host of advantages for appliance shopping, including the release of new models and enticing discounts on older ones. If you're in the market for home appliances, take advantage of all the deals that pop up in early fall.

PURCHASE OPPORTUNITIES

September marks the release of the latest models from major appliance manufacturers. Companies often unveil their newest innovations and technologies during this time, making it an exciting period for appliance enthusiasts. By keeping an eye out of these new releases, you can stay ahead of the curve and be among the first to experience the latest features and advancements in home appliances.

With the arrival of new models, retailers need to make room for inventory. As a result, older models often receive significant price reductions and discounts to encourage their clearance. This presents a prime opportunity for savvy shoppers to snag high-quality appliances at lower prices. Keep an eye on advertisements, online promotions and local stores to find out about clearance sales and take advantage of the



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attractive discounts.

September is also a time when many households are preparing to send their children and young adults back to school. Retailers often offer special promotions and deals targeting families and students, including discounts on home appliances.

PURCHASING TIPS

Look for appliances with the Energy Star label, as they are designed to consume less energy and save you money on utility bills. They can provide you with long-term savings and environmental benefits.

Before making any appli-

ance purchase, do thorough research and comparison. Read consumer reviews, visit manufacturer websites and consult reputable sources for information on the features, reliability and performance of different appliance models. Compare prices and warranties from various retailers

to ensure you're getting the best value for your investment.

Assess your specific needs and priorities. Think about the size, capacity and functionality needed for your household. Take into account your lifestyle, cooking habits and space availability. This can help you narrow your choices and find the best appliances for your needs.

Factor in the long-term costs and maintenance requirements of any appliance you plan to buy. Research the estimated energy consumption, maintenance needs and durability of different models. While it is tempting to buy the cheapest model, opting for appliances that offer good value over time and have a reputation for reliability can save you money and headaches.

Appliances can be significant investments. Research the warranty that comes with them and the customer service that the retailer and manufacturer offers. Look for appliances with extended warranties, favorable return policies and reliable customer support. This can give you peace of mind and assistance should any issues arise after your purchase.

If you've been needing to replace one of your tried-and-true appliances or want to check out the newest gadget, fall is a great time to head to your local store and bring home an appliance that will make your life easier.

Dress Your Porch For Fall

Your front porch is the portal that welcomes people to your home, greets passers-by and expresses your style.

Decorating your porch for the fall is a great way to welcome the season and make your home feel cozy and inviting. With so many colors, options and themes, you can create a look that is uniquely you and makes you smile every time you return to your home.

One great way to get inspiration is to browse Pinterest or Instagram and look at what other people have done. However, don't let yourself get intimidated. You can go as simple or as complex as you want and find your own style. Let those pictures be an inspiration, not an unreachable standard or an impersonal facsimile of someone else's expression.

Decide whether you want a particular theme. Do you want a traditional fall/harvest look? Do you want to decorate for one of the fall holidays? Do you want something that expresses your personal hobbies or interests? A porch display made from hockey sticks and pucks might not be traditional, but if that's your favorite sport, go for it.

SELECTING ITEMS

Start by choosing a color scheme that reflects the season and your other decora-



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tions. Consider using warm colors such as orange, yellow and red to create a cohesive look. Pantone releases seasonal color trends every year and 2023 will see a rise in such colors as Rose Violet, Red Orange, Red Dahlia, Viva Magenta, Tender Peach, High Visibility (a warm, vibrant yellow), Persian Jewel (a cooling

blue), and Carnival Glass (a mentholated green). WGSN fingered galactic blue, sage leaf, Astro dust, digital lavender and apricot crush as the in colors this fall.

Fall is all about nature, so consider incorporating natural elements into your porch décor. Standard favorites that never go out of style include

pumpkins, gourds, corn stalks, hay bales and colorful fall foliage that creates a festive atmosphere.

Other elements might include statuary of animals, signs or boards with text on them welcoming people to your home or rocking chairs.

Adding lighting to your porch can create a warm and

inviting ambiance as the days get shorter. Consider using string lights, lanterns or electric candles to add a cozy glow to your fall porch décor.

Another way to add interest to your fall porch décor is to use seasonal textures. For example, you can use a burlap wreath, plaid blankets or pillows and textured doormats to create a cozy and welcoming atmosphere.

DESIGNING THE DISPLAY

To make a statement with your fall porch décor, create a focal point that draws the eye. This could be a large wreath, a pumpkin display or a cozy seating area with fall-inspired pillows and blankets. The size and shape of your porch will dictate many of your choices.

When possible, add layers. Have some elements sitting on the porch and others hung higher.

While it can be tempting to go all-out with fall decorations, it's important to keep it simple and avoid a cluttered look. Focus on a few key elements that create a cohesive and inviting atmosphere.

Visit your local stores to find unique display items made by local artists or head to a craft store to make your own personalized porch décor. Maybe you want to experiment by making your own wreath or a pumpkin topiary. Remember it doesn't have to qualify for the cover of *Better Homes and Garden*, it just has to be made with love and enthusiasm.

Fall Cleaning

Spring cleaning may get all the attention, but some experts say it is even more important to do fall cleaning.

For months now, people have been trekking mud, sand and dirt through your house as they've celebrated all that summer has to offer. You're about to hunker down during the cold months where deep cleaning is often impractical. Take advantage of the last hurrah of beautiful weather and prepare your home for the winter season.

INSIDE JOBS

Fall is an excellent time to declutter your home and get rid of things you no longer need. Start by sorting items into categories such as things to donate, things to put away, things to fix, things to recycle and things to throw away. Organize your storage space and figure out how to get the most out of it. Consider following the "20-20 decluttering rule": If you can replace it in 20 minutes for less than \$20, get rid of it.

The Spruce recommends focusing on a single room or even a single zone within a room and working on it until it has been decluttered.

Deep clean your home. Make a list of cleaning tasks you would like to get to, especially those that aren't a part of ongoing, routine cleaning. Clean



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your carpets, dust your baseboards and wipe down your kitchen cabinets. Wash your walls and baseboards. Schedule time to wash your windows indoors and out, including all the window sills and window grooves. Move your furniture and beds and vacuum or sweep

underneath them.

Check your heating system before the temperatures drop to make sure it is working properly. Schedule a maintenance appointment with a professional and change filters. If you have a wood-burning fireplace, have the chimney pro-

fessionally inspected and swept.

Check all your batteries, especially in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

OUTDOOR TASKS

Cleaning your gutters is an

important task that will help prevent water damage to your home. Consider hiring a local, trustworthy contractor to come out and do the job. If you do it yourself, be sure to wear protective gear and follow all safety procedures for using a ladder. Make sure you work with someone else for safety reasons. Check your downspouts at the same time. Store your outdoor furniture to protect it from the winter elements. Clean all pieces thoroughly then either cover them with a tarp or move them to a dry storage space such as a garage. Drain and store garden hoses. If you have a pool, drain it and properly close it up for the year.

Check your weather stripping and caulking around doors and windows, making sure everything is properly weatherproofed for the season. It's also a good time to check your exterior paint and provide touch-ups as needed.

Trim any tree branches that might pose a danger during a winter storm. Clean out any yard debris where pests might make homes during the winter months. This is also a good time to prune shrubs.

If you have a deck, give it a power wash to help prevent the growth of mold and mildew. You can rent a power washer from a local garden store. After the deck dries, add a waterproofing stain.

All of these tasks will help keep your home in top shape as you head into winter.

Table Settings

With so many fall holidays, there is an abundance of entertainment opportunities in which the dining table becomes the centerpiece for celebratory meals.

The fall season provides numerous creative and festive options for setting a beautiful and memorable table, one that can fill your guests with the joy of family, friendship and community.

PLANNING A TABLE

Colors and themes can boost the appearance of your table and provide a foundation for your creativity. Popular fall colors include warm hues like orange, red, yellow and deep greens mixed with pops of color from seasonal accents like fall leaves, berries or mini pumpkins.

Themes are limited only by your imagination. Popular seasonal ideas include rustic harvest, elegant autumn or whimsical woodland. Picking a theme can set the tone for your table décor and help you make cohesive choices. Also, if faced with an abundance of options, it can help you narrow your choices to something that tells a story and delights your guests.

Add dimension to your table setting by layering different



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textures and fabrics. This can create visual interest and depth. For example, you can use burlap or linen table runners, textured placemats or patterned napkins.

CHOOSING ELEMENTS

Once you have chosen a theme and color, consider what you want to put on your table. Fall is all about nature's bounty, so one option is to bring the

outdoors inside by incorporating natural elements into your table décor. Consider using seasonal foliage like colorful leaves, branches or acorns as centerpieces or scattered along the table. Add a touch of elegance with mini pumpkins, gourds or pinecones.

Consider using dinnerware and glassware that complements the fall theme. Opt for earthy tones, rustic ceramics

or even vintage-inspired pieces to add charm to your table setting. If you don't want to buy all new dinnerware, consider putting out a fall-themed serving platter or serving bowls that speak to your themes. Use slabs of wood or wicker baskets to serve bread or other fall treats.

Add a personal touch to your table setting by using place cards and napkin rings. Get

creative with homemade place cards using fall-themed materials like leaves, twine or miniature pumpkins. DIY napkin rings made from ribbon, twigs or cinnamon sticks can also add a unique touch.

Enhance the ambiance of your fall table by incorporating candles. Choose candle holders in autumnal colors or natural materials like wood or metallic finishes. Consider using scented candles with warm and cozy fragrances like cinnamon, apple or pumpkin spice.

The focal point of your table is likely to be the centerpiece—at least until you put the food on the table. Make your own or find one that uses a mix of autumn flowers such as sunflowers, mums or dahlias. Put the flowers in a rustic vase, a pumpkin-shaped container or a cornucopia basket. Add depth with candles, foliage or seasonal fruits.

Don't forget your chairs. Enhance the coziness of your table by incorporating soft and cozy textiles like blankets or throws draped on chairs.

Finally, consider the overall layout of your table. Leave enough space for each place setting and room for guests to comfortably interact with each other. Pay attention to the flow of the table and make sure there's room for serving dishes.

Your decorating efforts will likely pay off with the delight of your guests as they gather around your lovingly set table and celebrate fall meals with you.

Planting Bulbs

Planting bulbs in the fall invests in your garden's future, filling your spring with vibrant blooms.

Taking advantage of the cool weather and preparing the soil ahead of winter lets you set the stage for a stunning display of flowers. Embark on a bulb planting journey this fall to fill your future garden with color.

SELECTING BULBS

There are many varieties of bulbs, each offering unique colors, shapes and blooming times. Popular options for fall planting include tulips, daffodils, crocuses, hyacinths and snowdrops.

You'll want to look into bloom time, height and sunlight requirements of the different varieties to create a well-rounded and visually appealing garden. Opt for bulbs that are firm, free of blemishes and specific to your climate zone for the best chance of success.

PLANTING THE BULBS

Fall is the optimal time to plant bulbs because it allows them to establish roots before the ground freezes. Aim to plant bulbs six to eight weeks before the ground typically freezes in your area. This timing varies depending on your climate zone, so consult local gardening resources or ask experts at your nearby nurs-



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ery for the ideal planting window in your region.

Prepare the soil to create the most favorable conditions for bulb growth. Find a well-drained location that receives ample sunlight. Remove any weeds, rocks or debris from the planting area.

Loosen the soil and amend it with compost or organic matter to improve its fertility,

drainage and overall health. Proper soil preparation contributes to healthy root development and robust blooms.

Different bulbs have varying planting depths, so it's important to follow the specific guidelines for each variety. As a general rule, plant bulbs two to three times their own height deep. Space them according to the recommen-

dations on the package or from your local garden expert to allow for proper growth and air circulation. Planting bulbs in clusters or drifts can create a more natural and visually appealing effect.

Dig a hole or trench deep enough to accommodate the bulb's planting depth. Place the bulb in the hole with the pointed end facing upward.

Avoid planting bulbs upside down, as this can hinder their growth. Gently backfill the hole with soil, ensuring there are no air pockets around the bulb. Water the area thoroughly to provide moisture for the roots and promote initial growth.

MAINTENANCE AND MULCHING

Protect the planted bulbs from extreme temperature and potential disturbances. Apply a layer of mulch such as straw or shredded leaves to insulate the soil and provide a barrier against frost. Mulching helps retain moisture and suppress weed growth, which contributes to a favorable environment for bulb development.

Depending on your area, your bulbs might attract wildlife such as deer or squirrels who will want to eat your bulbs and destroy your hard work and planning. To deter them, install physical barriers like netting or fences. Some gardeners plant bulbs that are less appealing to local wildlife or use companion plants that repel pests.

Continue to care for your bulbs by watering them thoroughly after planting and monitoring soil moisture throughout the fall. Keep the planting area free from weeds as they can compete for nutrients and water. Avoid overwatering so that the bulbs don't rot. As winter approaches, mark the planting areas to avoid accidentally disturbing the bulbs.

Stock Up On Winter Supplies

If one thing is a certainty in these post-pandemic days, it's that shortages are an ongoing reality.

When the crisp autumn air starts to descend, it's a clear sign that winter is just around the corner. As the seasons change, it's important to take time out to prepare for the colder months ahead. One essential aspect of this is to stock up on winter supplies in the fall. This ensures a smooth and comfortable transition into winter and doesn't leave you flailing when there is a run on winter goods and shelves become as fallow as the trees.

INDOOR ITEMS

Prepare your home for the colder months by making sure you have enough extra blankets, space heaters or programmable thermostats to maintain a cozy indoor temperature. Purchase air purifiers.

If you have a fireplace or wood-burning stove, stock up on firewood. Make sure it's properly seasoned and stored in a dry place. Additionally, if you rely on other fuel sources such as propane, kerosene or heating oil, purchase an adequate supply to last through the winter.

Winter storms can lead to power failures or other emergencies. Don't be part of the crowds making a last-minute



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rush on the grocery store for toilet paper. Stock an emergency kit in advance with items such as flashlights, batteries, a first aid kit, bottled water and a battery-powered radio. Stock your pantry with non-perishable food items like canned goods, dried fruits, nuts, pasta, rice and long-lasting staples.

Consider purchasing a backup power source like a generator or portable power

bank.

Winter often brings a higher risk of colds, flu and other illnesses. Stock up on over-the-counter medications for common cold symptoms, cough syrup, sore throat lozenges and fever reducers. Don't be without a COVID-19 test as if you start experiencing symptoms, you're not going to want to leave the house. Have a well-stocked medicine cabinet with any

prescription medications you may need.

OUTDOOR ITEMS

Climate change has brought snow to places unused to getting it. Be ready to tackle snowfall by equipping yourself with essential snow removal tools. This may include snow shovels, ice scrapers and de-icing agents such as rock salt or calcium chloride. If you live in an area

that gets regular snow, don't wait until the first blizzard to buy a snow blower. Regularly check and maintain your tools to make sure they are in good working condition.

Fall is a good time to buy patio heaters and winter sports equipment.

If you live in an area with heavy snowfall or icy conditions, it's essential to have a winter car kit. Include such items as an ice scraper, snowbrush, jumper cables, a shovel, a flashlight, extra blankets and non-perishable snacks. Buy winter snow tires in the fall so you are ready when the first bad weather hits. If you need them, buy snow chains for your tires.

HOLIDAYS AND SEASONAL DECORATIONS

Some holiday stuff will go fast, especially since they are hitting the store shelves earlier every year. Buy whatever decorations you need for the holidays you celebrate early. Purchase or retrieve items such as ornaments, lights, candles and festive indoor and outdoor décor to add cheer and warmth to your home.

If there are certain gifts that are on your "must-have" list, make sure you get them early in case these items are out of stock later in the season.

By stocking up on essential winter supplies in the fall, you can face the colder months with confidence and ensure a comfortable and safe winter season.