Tech Lawn and Garden

Landscaping tips from Georgia Tech experts

It’s mid-October, and the temperature is finally starting to feel like fall. This is the best time to begin preparing your lawn for winter.

Start by lowering the blades on your lawnmower to cut the grass shorter since the grass goes dormant at the end of the cutting season. After the grass is dormant, you still should continue to cut it. This trains the lawn for the next season, and it helps with raking in the spring, which promotes a healthier lawn.

There are a couple of options for maintaining your lawn during the winter. The first is to just let the grass go dormant and turn brown until spring. Remove all grass clippings and leaves because they smother the grass. Cleaning up the clippings also helps to reduce the growth of weeds. If your lawnmower has a bag attachment, use it. If you don’t have an attached bag, you should rake and bag the leaves.

Another option is to seed the lawn with winter rye so it stays green throughout the season. First, cut the grass very low, then rake the clippings. Next, you should aerate the lawn, which allows oxygen to penetrate the lawn. (You can rent a machine from a hardware store or hire someone to do it for you.) Then seed the lawn with winter rye and water it. Fertilizing the lawn is optional, depending on how quickly the rye grows. Winter rye typically grows faster than summer grass, so you will have to mow it more often.

The winter rye option is why Tech Lawn (at the base of the Hill on campus) is green year-round. Regardless of which option you choose, remember it is important to rake the leaves and avoid letting them sit there all winter. A clean lawn promotes a healthy lawn.

Prepare Lawns for Winter, Plant Bulbs for Spring

DONALD “D.J.” JORDAN
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

In Atlanta, the best time for planting spring bulbs is early to mid-November, before the ground freezes and it becomes too cold.

You can plant the bulbs in uniform rows or plant them to look like they grew there naturally. If you want to achieve a natural look, toss a handful of bulbs in the air and let them fall to the ground. Wherever they land, dig a hole and plant them there. Use a hand trowel to plant the bulbs 4 to 6 inches deep.

Daffodil, iris, hyacinth, and crocus bulbs have the best results. Tulips are hit or miss, with about a 50-50 chance of doing well. The soil type is not very important because the plants are hardly. But the location is key. Choose an area that has good drainage, so the bulbs are not under standing water. Also, look for an area with a good balance of sun and shade.

Pull weeds from the root and remove any leaves from the flower bed. As with lawn care, a clean flower bed promotes good plant health in any season.

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In the next Lawn and Garden installment, Tree Surgeon Quentin Holden will talk about mulching techniques and protecting plants for the winter months. If you have a topic you’d like to see covered or a question about landscaping — on campus or in your own yard — email editor@comm.gatech.edu.

MISCELLANEOUS

Oct. 17
The Institute for People and Technology (IPaT) was created in 2011 to shape the future of human-centered systems, environments, and technologies to promote fulfilling, healthy, and productive lives. Learn more about IPaT’s mission and how it catalyzes and amplifies Georgia Tech’s leadership for faculty members, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in Suite 600, Centergy Building. ipat.gatech.edu

Oct. 18
The Robotarium hosts an open house from 10 to 11 a.m. in Room 261, Van Leer Building. robotarium.gatech.edu

Oct. 20
Georgia Tech Volleyball hosts Duke University at 2:30 p.m. at the O’Keefe Gymnasium. ramblerwreck.com

Oct. 22
Facilities Management hosts its annual Sustainability Forum from 8 a.m. to noon at The Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design. The event is open to the entire campus community. RSVP at: recycle.gatech.edu

Oct. 22
The School of Architecture and Smart Cities and Inclusive Innovation initiative hosts “Redesigning Cities for Smart Mobility and Inclusive Innovation: The Newsweek Momentum Award Winners.” The talks will take place from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Historic Academy of Medicine. smartcities.gatech.edu

Oct. 24
The Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design hosts an open house from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. livingbuilding.gatech.edu

Oct. 24
The Institute for People and Technology hosts a Thursday Think Tank on “Detecting and Measuring the Impact of Food Insecurity at Georgia Tech” from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in Suite 600, Centergy Building. ipat.gatech.edu

Oct. 26
Withdrawal deadline for students for the fall semester. registrar.gatech.edu

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