

**OHIO
VALLEY
GROUP**

Landscape & Tree Service Professionals Since 1989

Idea Book:

Fall and Winter

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The Ohio Valley Group



DIY Landscaping Tips for Your Home

Constructing and maintaining your landscape may seem like a daunting task that requires expertise skill and a large investment of cash. However, with a little planning and dedication creating a beautiful outdoor living space for you and your family is not only possible but affordable. Here are some helpful do it yourself landscaping tips to make any home improvement project easy and affordable.



Get Inspiration

Before starting any do it yourself project, it is important for inexperienced landscapers to get inspiration and support for their first landscaping plan. Gather inspiration for your landscaping project from garden magazines, local landscaping trade shows, design images online, or even your next door neighbors. This inspiration will help guide and motivate your journey toward a better backyard.



Educate Yourself... and Avoid Expensive Mistakes

Landscaping takes dedication, patience, and practice. But knowledge is power and educating yourself on basic landscaping procedures will help you avoid expensive mistakes and make your outdoor living space all the more beautiful.



Schedule a Consultation with a Landscaping Professional

For an affordable price, you can schedule a consultation with a landscape architect who will help give you insight into the beautiful landscape you envision. Such a consultation will help you determine the feasibility, time period, and expense of your future landscaping project.

Time Purchases

When making the various purchases to make your landscaping dream a reality, time your purchases so you receive the best deals throughout the year. For example, lumber is less expensive during the winter months and trees, shrubs, and perennials are cheaper during early fall.

Sun and Wind Patterns

When building a patio or deck, be sure to study the sun and wind patterns throughout the day to help determine what side of the house you should build the patio or deck. Building a patio or deck in conflict with sun and wind patterns could make a patio hot and miserable or cold and windy.

Where are Underground Utilities?

A big mistake many do-it-yourselfers make is quickly digging holes around their home to plant trees, build patios, install fire pits, etc. only to accidentally damage important utility wires beneath the ground. To avoid paying for utility repairs, it is important to know where your underground utilities are and where they go before starting any major construction.

Start and Stay Small

When it comes to do it yourself landscaping it is best to start and stay small in the projects you complete. Unlike most home improvement television shows, you will not be able to completely remodel your entire backyard in less than seven days. Because of this, it is advised that you tackle parts of your overall landscaping vision such as building the fire pit, creating a flower bed, etc. This will allow you to enjoy the construction process without having ten different unfinished projects destroying the beauty of your backyard.

Don't Use Weed Prevention Fabric

Many beginning landscapers will instantly buy into the weed prevention fabric products only to discover that weeds continue to (1) grow through the fabric or (2) grow on the soil above the fabric. It is recommended that you use your money elsewhere when creating your landscaping project.

Where to Plant Trees

To protect driveways, sidewalks, and home foundations, it is recommended that you plant large trees at least 30 feet away to prevent roots from shifting and cracking these concrete areas.

Split Plants

Instead of buying new perennials annually, you can actually divide one perennial into possibly four smaller but separate plants that can be planted elsewhere in your landscape. Beautifying your landscape at no cost to you!





Landscaping Handouts

Believe it or not, there are a multitude of free landscaping opportunities at your disposal to easily and affordably create a beautiful landscape.

Local City

Cities will typically give away free trees, mulch, and compost in exchange for the homeowners cooperation in taking responsibility for planting and maintaining the tree.

Demolition Sites

If you are looking to build a patio or a fire pit, you should definitely make yourself aware of any demolition sites nearby because they typically will gladly give away the brick or stone left from the demolition site as long as you have permission.

Local Resources

Be sure to check with local arboretums, gardening clubs, and botanical centers on any giveaways or sales they may have.

We hope these DIY landscaping tips will help you get your start toward a stunning outdoor living space at an affordable price.



Fire Pits and Family Fun: Your Guide to Fall Festivities

Fall is a special time of year we often take for granted as it signifies the end of summer, the beginning of school, shorter days, and the inevitable realization that time is not our own. However, it also represents the fun colorful leaves, the cool crisp weather, the beautiful sunsets, the time for jeans and sweatshirts, the long night cookouts, and the warmth of our friends and family. Take in the full beauty of fall this year, and don't miss out on the fun fall festivities you can enjoy.

Apple Picking

A great way to spend the afternoon during the fall season would be to visit a local orchard with family and friends. Going apple picking is a classic fall tradition that results in family fun, life long memories, and tasty treats like apple pie, applesauce, apple fritters, candy apples, and more.



Plant a Garden

Believe it or not, it is possible to start a garden in fall. The cool weather makes the physical work gardening requires an enjoyable one that the entire family can participate in. If you decide to start a garden in the fall, it is best that you only plant crops which are resilient to cooler weather. Here is a list of cold resilient plants and crops for you to plant this fall: chives, bunching onions, radishes, broccoli, leaf lettuces, mustard, and spinach.



Seasonal Color

Make your home look beautiful this fall season by choosing seasonal colors. Arrange and plant stunning flowers and plants that survive the season's weather, compliment the season's mood, and make your autumn all the more enjoyable.



Corn Maze

Consider getting lost in one of the tall, magical corn mazes near your home town. This timeless fall tradition is for friends and family with puzzle solving minds or a fearless sense of adventure. Many local farms who host this autumn event attempt to capture the true essence of fall by offer warm apple cider and seasonal snacks for all to enjoy.

Hayride

Perfect for those of all ages, a fall hayride is great for kids with lots of energy and parents or grandparents looking for a way to relax without having to keep a constant eye on the kids. Experience the outdoors and expose your children or grandchildren to the vivid colors, the soft bristly feeling of hay, and the other beauties of fall.

Make Pinecone Bird Feeders

A way to incorporate fall into the hectic occupation of educating and entertaining your kids is to make pinecone bird feeders using a pinecone, peanut butter, and bird seed. Whether you have access to them on your own property or not, get your hands on some pinecones and cover them in a layer of peanut butter. Then have your kids roll the peanut butter covered pinecones through some birdseed. You can then hang these fall creations outside to witness the beautiful creatures that live right in your backyard.

Jump in a Pile of Leaves

One day when ridding your yard from the fallen leaves, think back to your childhood and remember the hours you spent jumping, rolling, and playing in massive piles of leaves. Turn your day of yard work into a day of fun by sharing your memories and releasing your inner child when you leap into the soft, crisp embrace of the leaves below.

Carve a Pumpkin

Fall contains various holidays and family customs and a new tradition you can start this year is picking and carving your own pumpkin. Although it is generally associated with the holiday of Halloween, carving and displaying a pumpkin will always compliment your home during the fall season regardless. Make it a personal project or include the entire family by going out and personally picking the pumpkin you wish to carve. While a little messy and time consuming; picking, cleaning, and carving a pumpkin each year with your family will create memories and traditions that last a lifetime.



Build a Bonfire

To finish your fun packed day of fall festivities, create a warm, crackling bonfire for your friends and family to enjoy. Cook hotdogs, make s'mores, and gather together using a fire bowl or a beautifully constructed stone fire pit.



Fall Maintenance Tips: When to Call the Professionals

Spring is gone, summer is here, and fall is just around the corner. Many may feel that landscape maintenance during the summer is a hassle and a huge ordeal, but fall only increases the burden of required landscape maintenance with the falling of the leaves and the necessary preparation for winter. Looking for some help and advice? Here are some beneficial tips to help you maintain your yard throughout the colorful season of fall.

Rake Leafs

The most intuitive yet tedious job during fall months is the raking, clearing, and mulching of leaves. Removing leaves from your yard is important because if left on your grass for three or four days, the leaves will suffocate the grass below, potentially resulting in grass-killing diseases. It is recommended that you regularly rake or blow any leaves off your grass or shred the leaves into harmless pieces using a mulching mower.

Dedicated gardeners may want to consider gathering some of these leaves and making their own compost for next year's lawn and flower beds. Anyone can do this by constructing a square pen made out of chicken wire and placing any collected leaves within the pen. To speed along the decomposition process, it is recommended that you toss the leaves within the pen once a week.

Planting

Believe it or not, planting new shrubs and trees is ideal during the early fall season due to the cool, wet soil that results from the changing season. Planting trees and shrubs during this time period allows the roots to firmly establish themselves, helping them survive the winter weather and get a great head start come spring and summer next year.



Strengthen Your Lawn

Aerate

Once your lawn is clear of any leaves and debris, aerating your lawn is the next step in maintaining your landscape during the fall season. Aerating your lawn, using a walk-behind aerating machine, allows water and nutrients to reach the roots of your grass by creating small holes nearly three inches deep within your yard. Aerating your lawn is the first step in strengthening your yard for the harsh cold and winter season to come.

Overseeding

After aerating your lawn, it is an ideal time to repair your lawn from the beating it may have received during the hot summer months. The process of repairing your lawn during the fall season is known as overseeding and calls for the sowing of seed over existing grass.

Aerating your lawn before overseeding increases the effectiveness of repairing your lawn because the grass seed is protected and buried within the three inches the lawn aerator creates.

Fertilize

Finally, it is recommended that you strengthen your existing grass for the cruel winter to come by fertilizing your grass. Similar to the overseeding, fertilizing after aerating your lawn is ideal because it allows the fertilizer to immediately reinforce the life source of your lawn: the roots. This will help your grass to better survive the winter weather and thrive come spring next year.

Pruning

While fall is a great season for enhancing and adding to landscape, it is important to tend to your existing landscape for a beautiful yard every year. Each fall it is recommended that you prune any dead or diseased limbs from shrubs and trees on your property to prevent damage to the tree during the winter months. To do this correctly, cut dead or diseased limbs near the trunk of the tree, but not flush with the trunk, so the bare wounds can heal properly. For large trees it is advised that you contact landscaping professionals, such as the Ohio Valley Group, to do the job safely and correctly.



Irrigation Clean Up

If your home is equipped with an irrigation system, it is highly recommended that you remove any standing water within the pipes because it can freeze during winter and permanently damage your irrigation system. This can be accomplished by first shutting off the water to your irrigation system and using a special attachment, hook up a low-pressure air compressor to your irrigation system and clear all the water from the pipes.



We hope these fall maintenance tips are beneficial as you strive to prepare your landscape for winter and ensure its beauty come spring time.

Also known as winterization, the Ohio Valley Group has trained technicians who can quickly and safely shut down your irrigation system and prepare it for the upcoming winter season.



Fall Harvest Gardening Wrap-Up

As summer comes to an end, it takes with it all the life and beauty of homeowner's gardens across the nation. The leaves on the trees begin to change color, the flowers begin to wilt, and cared for crops begin to die due to the changing temperatures and daylight. But for many avid gardeners, the gardening season is far from over. Here are some tips on wrapping up the gardening season and ideas to keep even the most passionate gardener busy.

Wrapping Up the Gardening Season

- Begin wrapping up the gardening season by cleaning out growing weeds, leaves, debris, and old, dying annuals to eliminate overwintering locations for harmful insects and diseases.
- Empty all pots and containers and store them indoors to prevent them from cracking or breaking during the winter.
- For the perennials in your garden, it is recommended that you cut them back to prevent snails, slugs, and other harmful pests from overwintering on your perennials. Wait to do this until the first major frost to ensure that no new growth is encouraged. Additionally, you should continue to water your perennials throughout the months of fall.



- To help prevent weeds, unproductive soil, and pests and disease, it is recommended that you plant a cover crop in your garden. This is accomplished by simply planting a low maintenance cover crop such as buckwheat, clover, sorghum-sudangass, field peas and oats, and rye (which is highly recommended for the late summer and fall season). Once planted and growing successfully, you must kill the cover crop when the seed heads emerge or when the top growth becomes uncontrollable. Till then soil once you have killed the cover crop and then wait two - three weeks before planting anything.



- Remove and discard of any diseased or rotting fruits as well as potato, squash, and tomato foliage to prevent disease and other infestations.
- Mulch your garden with finely chopped leaves and grass clippings after mowing your lawn.
- Lastly, make sure you clean all your gardening tools, equipment, and decorations before putting them all away for the winter. Clean your tools by removing all dried dirt with a damp rag and protect them from rust applying a light coat of oil.

Fall Garden Ideas



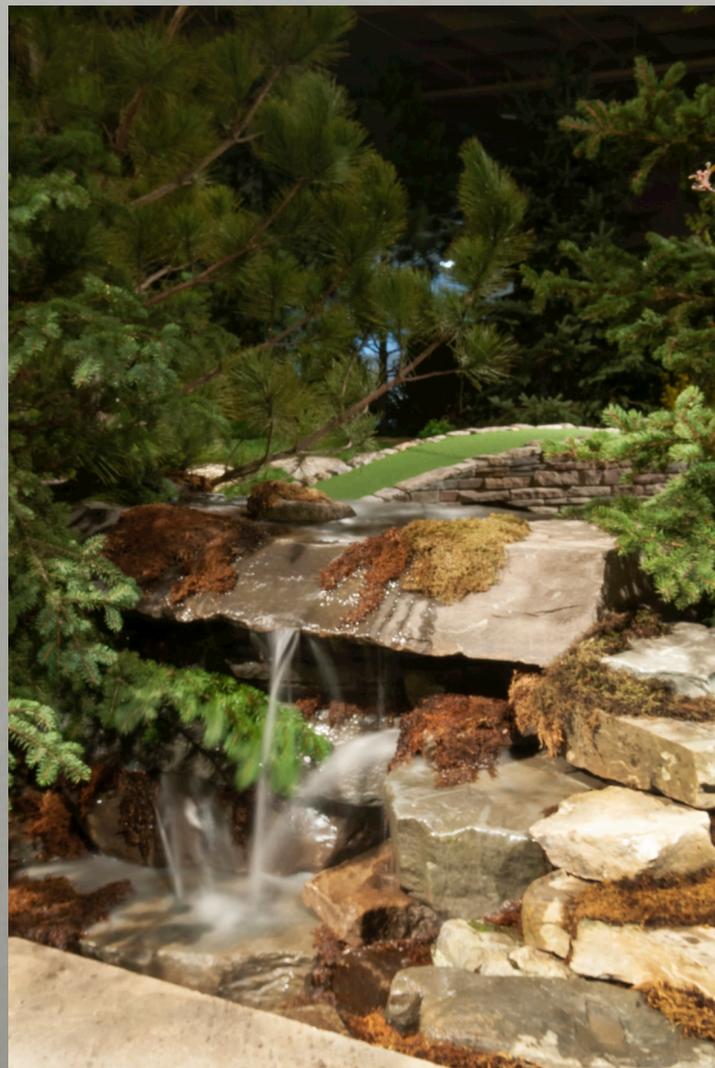
Using these helpful tips and ideas we hope you will never lose the joy and reward of gardening through the fall and winter seasons.

Idea #1: Plant Spring Bulbs

Now that the soil in your garden is well mulched and cared for, it is time to plant spring bulbs. Choose the healthiest bulbs by avoiding bulbs that are dried, extremely small, withered, or ridden with disease. Dig a hole three times deeper than the diameter of the bulb you are planting, place the bulb's pointed side facing upward, and covered with soil mixed in with bone meal and superphosphate.

Idea #2: Create Your Own Compost

Fall presents a great opportunity by giving every gardener the natural resources necessary to make their own compost for the next gardening season. Anyone can do this by constructing a square pen made out of chicken wire, placing any collected leaves within the pen, and leaving it to decompose until spring time. To speed along the decomposition process, it is recommended that you toss the leaves within the pen once a week.





Idea #3: Plant New Trees and Shrubs

Planting new shrubs and trees is perfect throughout the early fall season because of the cool, wet soil allow the roots to firmly plant themselves in the ground, helping them survive the winter climate and thrive come spring time.

Idea #4: Take Advantage of the Fall Prices

Now that the gardening/summer season is officially over, many gardening centers and home improvement stores will lower their prices on seed, mulch, tools, and equipment. Think ahead and do all the purchasing you can during the fall.

Idea #5: Plant Early Maturing Crops

The fall season still presents opportunities to continue gardening with the planting of crops that only take up to 30 days to mature. It is recommended to use the following early maturing crops during the fall season: chives, bunching onions, radishes, broccoli, leaf lettuces, mustard, and spinach.

Idea #6: Gardening Throughout Fall and Winter

Believe it or not, it is possible to continue gardening to your heart's desire throughout not only late fall but also winter. This is accomplished through the use of cold resistant plants/crops and cold prevention structures.

- **What to Plant**

If you decide to continue gardening throughout the fall and winter seasons, it is best that you only plant crops which are resilient to cooler weather.

- **Maturing in 90 Days:**

Beets, carrots, rutabaga, parsnips, globe onions, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, cauliflower, fava beans.

- **Maturing in 60 Days:**

Leeks, turnips, kohlrabi, winter cauliflower, collards, perennial flowers and herbs, and Swiss chard.

- **Maturing in 30 Days:**

Chives, bunching onions, radishes, broccoli, leaf lettuces, mustard, and spinach.

- **How to Winterize Your Garden**

Many southern states are able to garden all year round due to their cool but mild winters. However, most northern states must take extra initiative to keep the gardening season alive year round. These avid gardeners must construct or purchase structures that protect their crops from the freezing cold. For example: green houses, wind breaking walls, cloches, cold frames, hot beds, and raised beds. All of which significantly extend the length of the gardening season for thousands of people each year.



Top 5 Winter Musts for Your Yard



1. CLEAN IT UP.

It is important to make sure all debris, leaves, toys, and tools are off the lawn by the time winter comes. These objects can be inviting to mice, insects, plant diseases, and will suffocate your grass. Old fallen leaves are a great source of nutrients and organic matter. They can be placed in a compost pile or shredded and used as insulating mulch for flower beds.

2. MOW IT LOWER.

The last few times you mow your grass for the season, make sure to lower the notch a couple times. Grass that is cut between 0.5" and 1" will survive the best throughout the winter. Grass that is too long runs the risk of suffocating itself, causing disease, and can easily be damaged from the constant freezing and thawing conditions that winter brings along. However, beware of cutting the grass too short because that brings its own set of problems. Winterkill is a general term we use to define turf loss during the winter that can be caused by crown hydration, desiccation, low temperatures, ice sheets and snow mold.

3. BEWARE OF TRAFFIC.

Dormant grass is able to take a moderate amount of wear and tear throughout the winter. Be cautious of over using a path, especially when the ground is snow covered. A heavily worn path will cause compaction and the grass will be slower to green in the spring.

4. OVERSEED YOUR LAWN.

In the fall, grass tends to develop a two-tone look, as if half is dead and half is alive. However, the grass is not dead. The warm-season grass is simply going dormant for the winter, while the cool-season grass begins to thrive. Overseeding your warm season grass with cool-season grass allows for a nearly solid green lawn all winter long. Overseeding should usually be done about six to eight week before the first hard freeze. Keep in mind though that if cold weather arrives early, your new seeds may not have had time to develop a strong root system. Our best advice is to start overseeding early.

5. REMOVE ANNUALS AND MULCH PERENNIALS.

Annuals typically die when temperatures start to drop below freezing. Removing them before the hard snow hits will not only make your landscaping look better, but will save you time in the spring when new flowers need to be planted. Perennials also appear to die when temperatures drop below freezing, but they aren't actually dead. Their top growth dies back, making them appear dead, but the root ball is still alive. The best time to mulch perennials is right after the first hard freeze. Just be careful to avoid covering the crown or center of the plant because that can lead to rot.



Winter Wonderland: Creating Magic in Your Backyard

Wish you could be outside on a cold winter day? Creating a winter wonderland in your own backyard takes some creativity and customization. We have come up with a few ideas to get you started!

1. INSTALL A HOT TUB.

Everyone loves sitting in a warm jacuzzi during the winter, so you might as well install an outdoor hot tub for your friends and family to all enjoy together! What better way to get outside without having to bundle up! We can help you design and create your winter wonderland spa, surrounded with beautiful landscaping and a relaxing environment.

2. ADD ON AN ALL SEASON SUNROOM WITH BIG FIREPLACE.

The name says it all. An all season sunroom can be used year round. With walls made of windows, you can easily look out and watch the snow fall from the comfort and warmth of your home. Adding a large fire place makes the room cozy and keeps everyone warm, while still allowing them to enjoy the beauty of winter.

3. ADD OUTDOOR LIGHTING TO YOUR LANDSCAPING.

What good is a beautiful outdoor living space if you can't see it? Looking out and seeing the snow glisten under lights is perhaps one of the most beautiful sights of nature. Lighting up your landscaping brings a warm touch to your winter wonderland, and highlights every aspect of your home. Lights also help bring nature indoors.

4. BUILD AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN.

Sometimes during the cold winter months, a good barbeque sounds delicious! From cabinetry to appliances, it is important to design your outdoor kitchen with winter in mind. To get the most out of your money and enjoy it to its full potential, we suggest installing winter friendly cabinets and appliances. If they hold up and last throughout the winter, your outdoor kitchen is an overall better investment.

5. PLANT WINTER-HARDY PLANTS.

Winter plants do more than just survive in the cold- they thrive! While they bloom through the snow and show off their vivid colors, cold-hardy plants are the final touch to perfecting your backyard winter wonderland. We have come up with a list of winter-hardy plants that would look stunning in your backyard:

- Camellias
- Japanese Maple
- Evergreen Holly
- Winter Vegetables (Broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, leek, mustard, onions, spinach, Swiss chard, and turnips)
- Snowdrops
- Berry Bushes
- Crape Myrtle
- Bergenia
- Witch Hazel
- Hellebores

6. BUILD A BACKYARD FIRE PIT.

Nothing feels as cozy or homey as a fire pit. With the right seating and hardscaping, everyone will want to bundle up and sit around the fire during the cold winter months. An outdoor fire pit gives your friends and family the option to get out in the fresh open air and out of the house.

Oftentimes kids are sent outside to play in the snow, but adults don't want to sit there freezing. There is no better way to keep the family together and enjoy the great outdoors than by building a winter-friendly, outdoor fire pit.



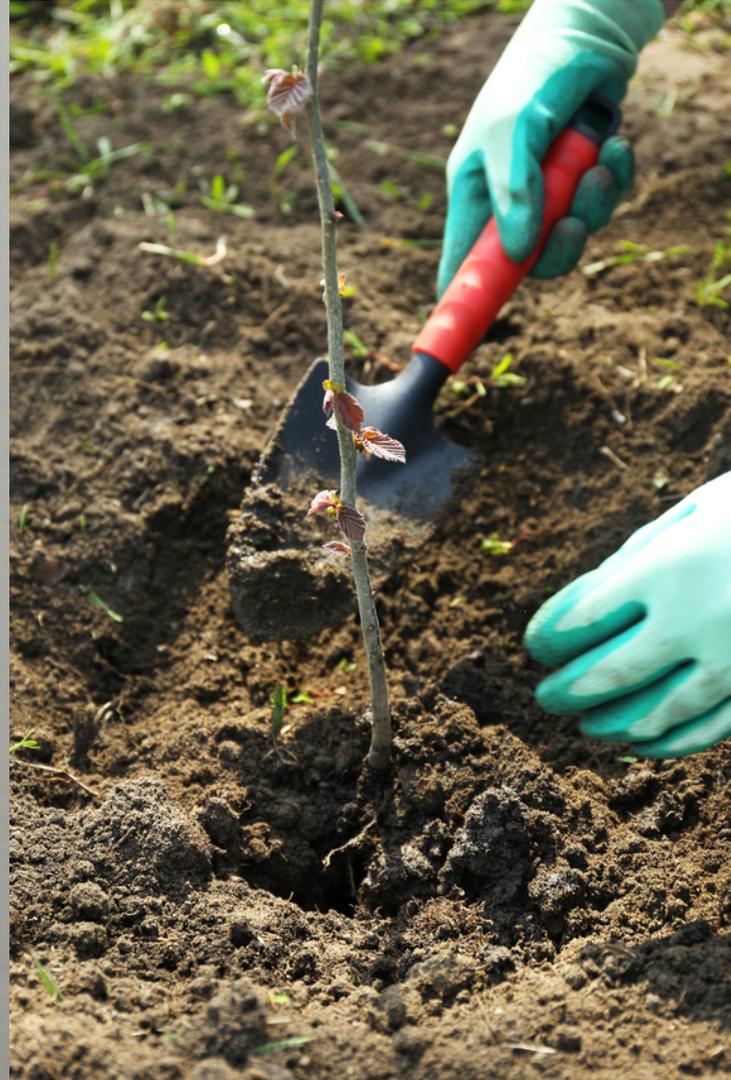
Transform Your Yard Just in Time for Spring

Our goal is exceed our client's expectations and help you make your backyard dreams a reality. We want to help you make the most of this spring.

It's never too early to start planning your outdoor renovations for the upcoming spring. From cooking and dining, to flooring and decking, to plants and trees, your yard will benefit from a little sprucing up after the long winter months. Outdoor living spaces are like an addition onto your home in the spring. By taking the time now to care for and prepare your yard, when spring time rolls around the corner you will have already set yourself up for worry-free maintenance, a beautiful yard, and unbeatable outdoor pleasure for the seasons to come.

Your yard is the exterior reflection of your home, so you should enjoy it outside just as much as you do inside. If family meals are important to you, and you enjoy grilling out, maybe consider adding an outdoor cooking and dining area to the back yard. Patios and decks are perfect for spending spring and summer nights outside with friends and family. Yard transformations have the ability to highlight what is important to you and your family.

Plants and trees are also a very important element in your outdoor living space. They can add the finishing touch, the privacy, and the beauty that ties everything in together. Coming up with a landscaping plan during the winter will allow for a much earlier start to renovations during the spring. Here in Ohio, we like to enjoy the warm weather for as long as possible. So why waste springtime making plans to transform your yard, when you can get a head start during the winter!



Fall Transform Your Yard Just in Time for Spring Ideas

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