

How to Make Yard Maintenance and Yard Waste Cleanup More Manageable

Yard work can sometimes feel daunting – but it shouldn't. Instead of spending your money on a professional lawn care service, follow this DIY guide to yard maintenance and waste cleanup that'll have your lawn looking prime in no time.



Why Yard Maintenance Matters

Gorgeous, healthy lawns don't just spring up out of thin air. Ongoing yard maintenance is crucial to ensuring your grass, trees, flowers, shrubs, and more are able to thrive. A well-maintained lawn is better able to bounce back from things like bad weather conditions, weeds, and infestations of insects and diseases. On the other hand, a yard that's left to its own devices might experience an increase in these problems or even suffer from a diminished root system, which can cause serious long-term problems.

Needless to say, routine yard maintenance is invaluable to the overall health of your lawn – and a healthy lawn makes for a happy homeowner.

Yard Cleanup Checklist

Everyone wants their yard to be the talk of the neighborhood – in the good way, of course. To ensure your lawn is in prime (and enviable) condition, here are a few key tasks to add to your weekly yard cleanup checklist.



1. Remove Yard Debris

If you start by removing visible yard debris like small branches, twigs, and rocks that might get in your way as you go, the rest of your yard cleaning process will be more manageable.

2. Pull Pesky Weeds

Make sure you don't leave the roots behind as you pull weeds, or they'll just grow right back! To make this task easier, try pulling weeds after it rains – they'll come up with less resistance when the ground is moist.

3. Water Your Lawn

Pro tip: it's better to give your lawn a good soaking (about 6 inches into the soil) once a week than to give it a quick drink of water every day. Try watering in the morning between 4 a.m. and 10 a.m. for the best results.

4. Mow the Lawn

When mowing the lawn, remember that you should remove no more than about a third of the grass stem for the best-looking lawn.

The Best Way to Pick Up Leaves



Another important step in the process is leaf cleanup. The best way to pick up leaves in your yard? Harness the power of your mower and have it do the bulk of the work for you! For a light smattering of leaves, simply insert the mulch plug in your mower and mow over them. Your mower can chop them up into tiny pieces that microorganisms on the ground can then break down – which adds more nutrients back into your lawn.

The most efficient method of leaf cleanup when there's a thick layer of them on your lawn – like during the fall, for instance – is to attach a bag to your mower to collect the leaves instead of mulching them and leaving your yard totally littered with small pieces of leaves.

In case you'd rather not dig the mower out of your garage or shed for this task, you can also use a leaf blower to gather leaves into more manageable piles that can be easily raked and bagged. Or, if your yard is on the smaller side, it might make more sense to pick up leaves the old-fashioned way: with nothing but a rake and a little sweat.

What Counts as Yard Waste?



Before you start disposing of all the debris from your yard cleanup, it's important to understand what items do – and do not – count as yard waste. To ensure that your yard waste is collected by your local collection service, it must be free of items such as: metal, food waste, soil, sod, stones, mulch, and garbage. Depending on factors like the size and amount of these items, they can typically be tossed in [Glad® ForceFlex Plus Large Bags](#) and included in your regular trash pickup (but be sure to check your local waste disposal service's guidelines first).

So what *is* yard waste? Things like tree trimmings and branches, leaves, house/garden plants, brush, grass clippings, and lawn edging are all OK to throw into an outdoor waste bin or compost bin.

Yard Waste Disposal Tips



Once you're ready to get rid of all the waste you've amassed during your yard cleanup, what should you do with it? Although it might be tempting to simply burn it, that's not necessarily a good idea. Burning brush (branches, leaves, twigs, etc.) can increase air, soil, and water pollution, and it also poses a risk for wildfires – not to mention there are typically strict local laws and regulations against doing so.

The easiest, most eco-friendly method of yard waste disposal is to recycle it. You can arrange to have your local sanitation department schedule a pickup of your yard debris, or drop it off yourself if you have the means to transport it. Make sure you do some research to figure out how your local waste disposal service requires outdoor waste to be bagged for disposal. Most disposal services require yard waste to be in a clearly marked bin or in paper outdoor waste bags.