

Fall Bed Clearing Checklist

Clearing your summer garden beds is an essential step to prepare for a healthy and productive fall growing season. Use this checklist to guide your process from start to finish, ensuring your soil, plants, and space are ready for the next round of growth.

Step-by-Step Checklist

- Assess current plants to determine which are still producing and which need removal.
- Harvest any remaining produce before clearing plants.
- Remove spent crops by cutting stems at the base with clean pruners.
- Collect seeds from healthy plants and store properly for next season.
- Separate plant debris into compostable vs. diseased/pest-infested materials.
- Pull weeds completely, including roots, to prevent regrowth.
- For invasive weeds, consider solarizing the soil with clear plastic for 2–3 weeks.
- Loosen compacted soil gently with a garden fork to improve drainage and root penetration.
- Amend soil with compost, aged manure, or balanced organic fertilizer.
- Rake the bed surface smooth for even planting depth.
- Water the soil deeply to integrate amendments and prepare for planting.
- If not planting immediately, cover beds with light mulch or row cover to protect soil.

Timing Tips

- Zones 8–10: Begin clearing beds 4–6 weeks before fall planting to allow soil to rest.
- Zones 6–7: Transition beds as summer crops finish; plant fall crops late August to early September.
- Zones 5 and colder: Clear promptly after summer harvest to capture residual soil warmth.

Recommended Tools

- Garden gloves for protection
- Bypass pruners for cutting stems cleanly
- Garden fork for loosening soil
- Wheelbarrow or tarp for debris transport
- Hand rake for smoothing soil



Reflection

As you clear away the remnants of summer, consider what in your own life may have run its course. Just as the garden benefits from removing what no longer serves its growth, our hearts and routines can also flourish when we make space for the new season ahead.

Journal Prompt

What in my life has completed its season and needs to be cleared away so new growth can take root? What 'nutrients'—habits, relationships, practices—should I add to prepare for what's next?

