

## **Fall Garden Stuff You'll Wish You Had Done Next Spring**

Most Garden enthusiasts are ready to take it easy for a while. Oh, by January they'll be going crazy looking for something to plow, plant, or harvest, but for now, most have had enough. Now, I'm not a garden fanatic, but with what little I did, I'm still too tired to do the things that I know need to be done so that next spring I won't be saying "I knew I should have.....!"

For instance, the area where tomatoes did fine this summer and provided all those bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwiches needs to be cleaned. You know the vines are still tied up and tomatoes are even hanging on those old vines or littered around on the ground. Well I've walked past them at least a dozen times and thought I needed to pull them up and haul them off or start a compost pile, but I haven't. Tomorrow I'll have more time. That same spot is probably where I'll plant next year as I have for the past several, and leaving old dead vegetable plants in the garden is just asking for more disease and insect problems next summer.

Do you remember those tomatoes rotting on the bottom, the blossom end rot? If you asked me about it, I suggested soil testing and probably lime would be needed. If you haven't done so, now would be a great time. I haven't done mine yet either. Remember, it takes several months for lime to "work." And the calcium in lime is what will stop the blossom end rot next summer.

Lastly, I really don't like tinkering with small engines in the spring because I didn't store them properly back in the fall. You know, like cleaning them up, lubricating and draining the gas. When I finished with mine the last time, I was too busy trying to get to the Georgia/Auburn game to worry about all that.

Seriously, many of the insect and disease problems we see in the spring and summer gardens could have been prevented by spending a little time removing old plants and performing some pre-winter maintenance on tools and engines.

If you didn't remember to plant a cover crop, you might get away with it now with a little luck on your side. I'd try rye. It matures early and can be turned under sooner in preparing to plant.