

# Timely Turf Tips

November 2012

**Pumpkins, hot cider, pies, quilts, daylight savings time, warm winter coats, first snow.** During the winter months, we imagine being snugly locked inside our warm homes while the cold winter winds howl outside. Unfortunately, your home also starts looking mighty fine to mice this time of year. Mice love to break into our toasty warm homes as temperatures drop. They can slip through a crack that a pencil will fit into (slightly larger than 1/4 inch in diameter). The most successful and permanent form of house mouse control is to seal any openings larger than 1/4 inch. Store food and pet food in glass or metal containers with tight fitting lids. Use standard single or multiple catch traps and glue boards. Bait the traps with a small dab of peanut butter or the more successful "mouse attractant" gel available at the Mill. Organically, mice are repelled by the strong odor of peppermint found in "Mouse Magic". "Fresh Cab" is another form of repellent that is made with balsam fir oil. These are great alternatives for stored boats, campers, RVs, cottages, sheds and basements. Visit the Mill for all your options or get a cat.

## November Chores

Rake excess leaves and mow the lawn one last time if needed.

If you haven't made a final lawn fertilizer application get it done in early November. Be sure to sweep up any fertilizer spilled in streets, sidewalks, or driveways, and thoroughly water in fertilizer if rain doesn't do the job.

Dig remaining root crops like parsnips, fall radishes, and carrots before the ground freezes. Cold-tolerant crops like Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, spinach, cilantro and some other greens will tolerate temperatures in the mid to upper 20s, but harvest them when colder temperatures threaten.

Empty and store clay pots - they can break outdoors when freeze/thaw cycles occur. Scour the yard for stray garden tools. Clean and store tools and other garden ware.

Provide additional mulch to insulate marginal perennials after the ground begins to freeze. The goal is not to keep frost out, but to prevent freezing and thawing and to keep the temperature from falling too much below freezing. Putting a lot of mulch on too early can promote a lot of warmth and humidity around the crowns of plants and encourage rot. Keep bags of leaves or other sources of mulch handy.

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