

Take time to evaluate landscape this fall

Fall is a great time to evaluate your landscape. We're approaching the end of another growing season. This is a good time to learn, evaluate and formulate plans for next year.

Our landscapes are not static. Neither are our lives. Over time, landscapes change and our needs change. Lawns, shrubs and trees are living and respond to their environment, growing and declining with time. Many older landscapes become in need of renovation and improvements. Older plants outgrow their space. Others decline. Large, open lawns for play may not be needed any longer as children become older and eventually move away.

There are plants that are best removed from the landscape. We recently removed overgrown wax myrtles at the Extension Office landscape. They were interfering with good visibility when attempting to drive out of the Extension Office parking lot. Plus, they were less than aesthetically pleasing. That's a nice way to say they were ugly. The area looks better after removing the plants without having to replant with anything.

Before your landscape plants completely go dormant, do a walk through of your landscape. Make notes if necessary as you visually inspect the plants. You get to see the plants that did great, the plants that didn't do so great. You can make decisions on which plants to do away with, which to keep, which were more trouble than they are worth from a maintenance standpoint, etc.

As you inspect your landscape, ask yourself questions. You can easily identify problem areas in the lawn now. As you identify problem areas in the lawn, attempt to determine why those areas aren't doing so well. Begin formulating plans for correcting those areas. Decide if renovating and replanting with grass is your best option. Or, something other than grass may be the best option, particularly if there is a history of problems with grass in a specific location.

It may be time to replace an older, declining plant with something new. There may be a plant that hasn't performed up to par but that would do better if moved to a more appropriate location – fall is a great time to relocate plants. Now is a good time to take a soil sample and possibly take the guesswork out of liming or fertilizing. We can test the pH at the Extension Office now and you'll still have plenty of time to apply lime, if needed.

This only represents a few ideas related to evaluating your landscape. You'll probably think of many more as you're out in the landscape. Taking notes will allow you to implement your ideas later.

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