



City of
Kelowna

Pesticide Free: Winter

Tips for December, January & February

Six tips for winterizing a lawn

1. Stay off lawns as much as possible.
2. Do not park or keep heavy equipment on lawn since this damages lawn blades.
3. Reduce snow mounds on turf and shrubs and avoid sodium based damaging ice-melting products that leave destructive residues behind.
4. Instead, use environmental brands of ice-melting products or sand for traction.
5. Winter is a great time to think about re-designing gardens or lawns. Plan your design and think about how you would like your yard to look in the future.
6. If you have recently moved, read any documentation on the past history of the lawn and plants. Think about what amendments might be necessary.

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Winter – a time for change

Winter is an ideal time for designing or refurbishing areas of your yard to make them more environmentally friendly and easier to maintain. Here are examples of lawn and garden alternatives to incorporate into landscaping for drought resistance, less water usage, and lower maintenance:

- Dutch white clover
- Planter boxes
- “Low-mow” grasses
- Ornamental grasses
- Wild flower meadows
- Flower gardens
- Vegetable gardens
- Ground covering plants
- Shrubs
- Trees
- Mulched beds and pathways
- Patios, concrete, decks, ponds
- Xeriscaping
- Synthetic turf

4 steps to prepare for a healthy lawn

1. Prepping soil for seed or sod is the most important step for establishing a healthy lawn. Apply 3 to 6 inches of screened (devoid of weed seeds) top soil.
2. Use a landscape rake in a variety of different widths to distribute top soil evenly.
3. Using a manual roller, grade soil to a smooth, flat consistency.
4. Lastly, apply seed or sod and push roller over areas for better contact with soil.

Plan for next season

Winter is best for planning a new lawn. Use the chart below to help you choose whether you should use grass seed or sod. Sod or seed should be a combination of bluegrass, fescue or ryegrass. There are many varieties produced for the Okanagan that take into consideration the extreme temperatures in summer and winter. You can gather further information from local sod and seed nurseries to make decisions. Sod is great for quick greening, erosion/dust control and suppressing weeds/weed seed. Seed is less expensive to buy, easier to apply and has more varieties to choose from. Seed can be applied by small hand held broadcaster or wheeled drop or broad cast spreader.

January is the time to start planting certain vegetable seeds indoors. Some vegetable crops, such as tomato, pumpkin and squash, have long growing seasons and benefit from an earlier start indoors. Jump start the new season by planting seeds in starter mix, plastic grow pots and trays. Use grow lights to simulate sunlight and warmth or place trays next to sunny window sills. Seedlings will be ready to transplant outside after spring’s last frost in the new year.

Seed versus sod

Scenario	Seed	Sod
Initial cost	Low	High
Establishment/germinating time	Long	Short
Prep work	Same	Same
Labour/installing	Low	High
Grass varieties	Many	Few
Best time to plant	Fall	Any time
Failure risk	High	Low
Weed stress	High	Low
Erosion stress	High	Low