Every weekend of the last few months homeowners have spent mowing, weeding, edging and trimming their lawn so that it will look its best. In order to ensure a lawn makes a complete recovery after winter hibernation, one may want to spend the fall taking steps to help their lawn survive the winter months ahead.

Winterizing a lawn varies depending on how harsh a typical winter is. There are certain key tasks to complete before one can rest for the winter season.

—Remove fallen leaves and debris. Leaf cleanup is among the tasks homeowners dread the most. Raking leaves can be arduous, but it is well worth the effort. Fallen leaves can smother the grass and lead to dead spots and decay next season.

Wait until the majority of the leaves have fallen from the trees before beginning to rake; otherwise, the process may need repeated throughout the fall.

Mulched leaves can be added in small amounts to garden beds to provide rich organic material for next year's crop of flowers.

Be sure to pick up any twigs and other debris as well. Additional debris can become trapped under snow and hinder grass growth when spring arrives.

—Cut the lawn short. Unless the season is unseasonably wet and warm, a lawn shouldn't grow too much in October and November. Continue to cut the lawn until there is no visible growth for about two weeks.

It pays to give it a short cut before frost arrives so that long piles of dead grass will not smother any new growth in the spring. Also, long grass tends to bend down upon itself, trapping moisture that can lead to fungal diseases like snow mold.

Lawn care important when preparing for a cold winter

