



Fall 2015



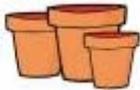
From the Ground Up ↑

Get those pots and tools sorted now, and you'll be free to focus on your plants when spring arrives.

Tips for De-cluttering Your Garden Workspace

Now that work in the garden has slowed down a bit, take a tip from articles that stress cleaning, de-cluttering and reorganizing your home and do the same for your garden work area. No matter whether it's a shed or greenhouse, small potting bench or shelf in the garage, you will benefit from a clean, organized space during gardening season. And by finding out what you have and what you need, you may be able to take advantage of fall clearance sales on tools and accessories.

Pull everything off the shelves and out of the corners into a central sorting space so you can really see all your stuff. Don't be tempted to ignore those things in the back. Weed out everything that is broken or no longer needed.



Now look at what remains. Group items in general categories: pots, tools, chemicals.

Pots and containers. Every gardener seems to end up with stacks of pots and containers in a variety of sizes and shapes and it's tempting to keep them all. But if your pots have taken over your storage area, you should thin down your collection.

Evaluate what you really need. You may wish to keep some plastic pots of different sizes for starting vegetables and annuals, some ceramic pots for your deck and some terra-cotta pots for the garden. Only keep what you love and will use. Get rid of the rest. Often the black plastic pots that nursery plants come in are recyclable so make sure they go in your blue bin.

Tools. Tools -- especially hand tools, seem to multiply. If you don't use them, give them away.



It's easy to neglect tool maintenance in spring and summer, when you're too busy using them. Clean and repair your tools now that they're out and before you put them away for the winter. At the same time, arrange for needed maintenance of things like lawn mowers. You'll beat the crowd at the repair shop at the start of mowing season.

Chemicals and fertilizers. Check use-by dates on fertilizers, sprays and other chemicals to be sure they're still viable. Then decide just how many of these you will actually use. This might be a good time to switch over to integrated pest management using more natural pest and disease control. Dispose of any un-needed items according to package directions and local bylaws. It may mean a trip to your local site for hazardous waste disposal.

Go to www.regina.ca/residents/garbage/recycling-programs/household-hazardous-waste to take advantage of their hazardous waste collection day. Be aware liquid pesticides and fertilizers cannot be frozen if you wish to use next season.

Garden furniture and accessories. Clean and make any repairs to your garden furniture so it's ready to use in the spring. If anything needs replacing, now might be the time to go shopping for any new pieces to get the aforementioned fall clearance pricing. Garden accessories and decor items can take a beating. Get rid of things that are worn out, broken or no longer fit your garden style.

Putting it back together. Wipe or brush down the space. It doesn't need to be absolutely spotless, but getting rid of spider-webs and plant debris is a good idea.

As you put things back, think about where they really should go. Put things you use all the time in an easy-to-reach place. Store hand tools in a bucket or hang long-handled tools on a wall. Think of ways to corral twine, tape, labels and other small items. Find a place to stack bags of soil or buy containers to store them. Perhaps you should get a small toolbox to store your irrigation paraphernalia. A cabinet with a lock would help you store chemicals safely.



If this is a space you'll be spending some time in or is highly visible, look for ways to personalize it with colours and items that make you smile. Then give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done. Simply knowing what you have and where it is will make the beginning of the gardening season that much easier.

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DWARF MUGO PINE



The best part of using dwarf conifers such as dwarf mugo pine is enjoying year round interest without giving up your whole garden

Dwarf mugo pines are very hardy, durable evergreens with dense bright green foliage with many uses in the landscape. They can be grouped in mass plantings because they can be maintained to a small, uniform shape. They can be grown as a foundation plant in the front of your house or in a rock garden. Dwarf conifers mix well with roses and deciduous shrubs. They add great color and textural contrast in a perennial border and will be a focal point in the winter next to dry, tan-colored plumes of ornamental grasses.

Pinus mugo var. *pumilio*, often sold as dwarf mugo pine, is a compact, rounded plant when young. It grows more slowly than most other varieties. However, it can eventually become a three- to six-foot wide globe in the landscape and will need annual pruning to keep its size in check.

If you want an actual "dwarf" mugo pine, select a named variety. These are a group of cultivars selected from seedlings and vegetatively propagated.

*'Slowmound' is an outstanding cultivar. It only grows a couple inches a year and retains its tight, round shape. It is compact enough to plant in small spaces. It is ideal for rock gardens and mixed borders. It is tolerant of poor soil and drought, once established. Pinching the new growth once each year in late spring will create a tight mounded shape. Its mature size is approximately 3' x 3'

*'Mops' mugo is a dwarf form that is considered one of the best by many nursery professionals. It forms a very dense compact mound and is excellent for rock gardens, foundation plantings or as a feature in a shrub bed. It grows 2-3" per year, and after 15 years will reach 3-4' tall and 4-5' wide.

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As the mugo in this photo grows, there will be less room for annuals and pots in this planting bed.

Pruning should be done every year to maintain tight, compact plants. Some very dwarf selections require no pruning, but most do benefit. Pruning is quite simple due to the unique way pines grow. The new growth of pines, called a candle, elongate first. Then the needles develop after the new stems have almost reached their full length. Wait until the new growth has fully extended but the new needles are a quarter to half of their mature length. At this stage, cut back the new growth by half to three-quarters, depending on how severe you want to be. This early pruning will allow the plants to produce a cluster of growth buds at the cut point. The result will be denser growth of branches the following year. If you wait too late to prune, only one bud might form at the cut point. This will not really help thicken up the plant in subsequent years. Do not prune back into wood two years or older, as the plants will not generate any new buds on old wood.



← Mugo in larger bed with boulders and Autumn Joy Sedum.

Mugos as a mass planting. As they grow they will cover fill the bed completely. →



Begin Rabbit Protection Now

Rabbits may begin to nibble on newly planted trees and shrubs in late fall and, of course, throughout the winter. Protect your investment now through this winter with at least 2' tall cylinders of 1" mesh, chicken wire or similar barrier. Other control methods include plastic tree wraps and liquid rabbit repellents such as SKOOT sprayed on the plants.



Using Old Garden Seed

Seed stores best if kept in a cold, dark, dry location. Seed will usually remain viable for about 3 years under these conditions though there are exceptions. For example, members of the carrot family (carrots, parsnips and parsley) are short-lived and are usually good for only 1 to 2 years.

If you are unsure of viability and have plenty of seed, there is an easy method of determining how good your seed is. Place 10 seeds on a paper towel moistened with warm water and cover with a second moistened towel. Roll up the towels and place inside a plastic bag with enough holes for air exchange but not so many that the towels dry quickly. Place the bag in a warm place such as the top of a refrigerator. Remoisten towels with warm water as needed. After the first week, check for germination. Remove sprouted seed and check again after another week. Add these numbers together to determine the percent germination.

Design Tip:

Before deciding on the dimensions of a patio or deck, visit a couple of retailers and measure the type of furniture you'd like to have, then factor in how much space is required to get around and behind it -- you might be surprised at how much space you really need. Here are some useful general guidelines:

For a round table four feet (1.2 metres) in diameter with four chairs, you will need a minimum area: 8 x 8 feet (2.4 x 2.4 metres)

For a rectangular table six-foot-long (1.8-metre) with eight chairs, you will need a minimum area:
8 x 10 feet (2.4 x 3 metres)

For two chaise lounges you will need a minimum area:
8 x 8 feet
(2.4 x 2.4 metres)

Patio, terrace or deck
Minimum area: 12 x 12 feet
(3.6 x 3.6 metres)

Walkway
Minimum width: 4 feet
(1.2 metres)



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