



## Tip of the Week

### Why do fall cleanup in your veggie garden?

With the snow flying this week, it's easy to sign off on gardening for the year and postpone any remaining chores until spring when we're in the mood to gear up for the next growing season. But think twice if you haven't yet cleaned up the veggie garden.



Many diseases and insects could spend the winter in old plant debris and be primed to erupt next spring. By getting rid of that debris now, your garden will be off to a healthier start next year.

Certain types of fungus overwinter on diseased plants and also on some weeds. Viruses that affect tomatoes, in particular, will survive on dead plants, though not in the soil. Remember that weed debris, as well as the old garden plants, can harbor viruses, so it's best to eliminate all the dead plant debris that's in or near the garden area.

Another compelling reason for fall clean-up is that certain virus-carrying insects will use plant debris, dirt clods or soil crevices for their winter homes. Providing those insects with a safe haven means the continuation and proliferation of both insects and viruses from one season to the next. For optimal control of pests and the viruses they carry, tilling the soil in addition to removing debris will bring the best results.

**And it's not just about veggies.** Removing leaves under a fungus-infested plant will go a long way toward a healthy come-back for the plant next spring. In some cases, you may have taken an early leaf drop as fall just coming early for the plant when in reality it was due to fungal infestation. Play it safe throughout the landscape by doing a good job of fall clean-up.

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**Need help putting your landscape to bed for the winter?** Go to [www.alcc.com](http://www.alcc.com) and click on *Find a Pro*.

*Technical information courtesy ALCC member industry experts and Carl Wilson, CSU Extension Denver.*



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