

# Seasonal Tasks in the Greenhouse

*Hello Autumn*

Fall is an important month in the greenhouse for many gardeners trying to extend their season as long as they can. To maintain heat in smaller greenhouses (around 100 sq ft), keep your circulating fan at one end of the greenhouse, opposite the door, at about bench level directing the warm air across and slightly up. Place your portable heaters near the floor closer to the entry door so that it will replace lost heat quickly.

Some customers line the inside of the greenhouse with a clear 4 mm plastic or bubble wrap to maintain heat in the greenhouse. To fasten, use special insulating clips or short pieces of rope and push into the top and bottom of the bolt track on the inside of each glazing bar to keep it in place.

Air circulation is critical in the colder months. To keep the temperature distributed evenly in your greenhouse, your circulating fan should be running at all times. This will reduce the amount of condensation in your greenhouse, help control plant diseases and avoid algae build up.

We recommend only opening vents and doors on warm days. Keep your doors and vents closed at night. If you experience some solar gain in the colder months, consider using black barrels filled with water to act as a thermal heat sync or partition a part of your greenhouse and heat that area only.

Cut back on watering as sitting water is not a good thing in the greenhouse. In some cases, it might be a good idea to stop watering in fall. Extra moisture and cold soil encourage insects like fungus gnats to multiply. Most



winter crops will be in “holding” mode because they are not growing vigorously and can handle less water.

If you are hoping to extend your season in the greenhouse, remove all summer crops to ensure they do not encourage diseases or pests. If you plan on overwintering plants, wash the leaves, remove pests and diseases. Cool nights and warm days encourage a sooty mold to grow. Remove the mold with a Q-tip dipped in alcohol. Then wash the leaves with a soapy soft cloth. Immediately after cleaning them, cover the plants with a protective Ag-30 ribbon cloth to give them extra protection over winter.

If you use fabric row covers, make sure you wash them on a hot cycle in your washing machine before laying them over your winter plants.



# hello winter.

The trick to a winter greenhouse is cold tolerant plants, and keeping the greenhouse temperature above frost. Temperate plants, like Meyer lemons, hardy cactus, and olives tolerate light frost. Hardy vegetables, like spinach, mustard greens, arugula, kale, beets, carrots, and swiss chard thrive in a cool greenhouse and can freeze completely and spring back to life when conditions warm up.

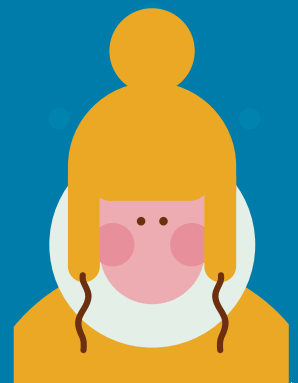
Providing heat just where you need it is easily accomplished with old-school Christmas lights or soil warming cables. Lay the waterproof soil warming cables on the soil and set potted plants over the heat for happier winter plants.

A thermostat with a plug-in for your lights as well as a space heater will keep the chill off the plants when the temperatures really dip low while you are tied up in your office or fast asleep late at night. The thermostat will help to regulate the heater, turning it on as needed and then

turning it off when the solar effect of your greenhouse kicks in during the day.

Adding a layer of Agribon fleece adds 2-7 degrees Celsius (35 – 44 Fahrenheit) of frost protection, depending on the weight of Agribon you use. Higher numbers like Agribon 30 give more frost protection than lower numbers like Agribon-19 and is a great low tech solution.

Moving air is less likely to freeze than air trapped in cool corners of pockets of the greenhouse. Running a fan continuously in your greenhouse, winter and summer, keeps the air moving and prevents cold from greatly affecting plants in winter.





# Hello Spring



Most gardeners are excited to get back in the greenhouse and start growing. All of the winter planning is generally done and now it's time to get started. This is a great time to do a light clean of the greenhouse after winter. You have the least amount of plants growing now and it's the best time to take stock of what needs to be composted. Get rid of dead or dying plants, weeds and anything that will rot, meltdown or cause problems going forward. If you have time, sweep the floor, and wipe down dusty, spore-filled surfaces and get your pots ready for spring!



# Hello Summer

Summer in the greenhouse is all about an abundance of heat and how to combat it. Shade cloth is another low tech solution that can help. You can hang shade cloth inside the greenhouse, drape it over your greenhouse (ensuring it does not sit directly on your greenhouse) or stretch shade sails between framing bars of your greenhouse.

You can also set up extra fans or consider an exhaust fan package

to circulate hot stagnant air. The screen door in your greenhouse is an excellent passive cooling option. Open the screen door at nighttime to allow the cool air to come in.

Watering the soil and paths in the evening in the greenhouse and again mid-morning helps cool the soil and air. This increases the humidity and sometimes this is enough to help flowers as they become pollinated and form flowers.

If there is a concerning amount of heat, consider a portable air conditioner that has a dehumidifier included. This is a short term solution that can help during a heat wave.

Certain plants are also ideal for helping with shade. Large leafed plants like elephant ears, fiddle leaf, and banana leaf will happily absorb the heat and protect more tender plants below.