

# Winter Garden Prep Checklist

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## 1. Soil Amendments

- Add compost for organic matter.
- Incorporate well-aged manure for slow-release nutrients.
- Use rock phosphate or bone meal for phosphorus.
- Add wood ash for potassium (only if soil is not alkaline).
- Adjust pH: lime for acidic soils, sulfur for alkaline soils.
- Timing: Zones 3–6: early to mid-fall; Zones 7–10: late fall/early winter.

## 2. Cover Crops

- Cold climates: winter rye, hairy vetch, crimson clover.
- Mild climates: field peas, oats, mustard greens.
- Sow 4–6 weeks before first hard frost.
- Rake in lightly, water gently.
- Cut down or till in spring before planting.

## 3. Mulching Strategies

- Retains moisture, insulates soil, prevents weeds.
- Best materials: straw, shredded leaves, wood chips, pine needles.
- Layer depth: 2–4 inches, keep away from stems.
- Timing: Cold climates – after ground cools, before freeze.
- Mild climates – before heavy winter rains.

## 4. Regional Timing Recap

Zones 3–6:

Amendments/Cover Crops: Mid-Sept to Early Oct

- Mulch: Late Oct to Early Nov

Zones 7–10:

- Amendments/Cover Crops: Late Oct to Early Dec
- Mulch: Before rainy season