

# Put Your Garden to Bed for the Winter

Mitigate disease, weeds, and improve soil health!

HAMILTON COUNTY  
Soil & Water



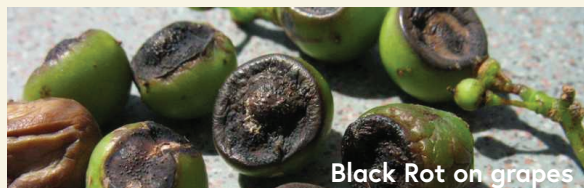
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

www.hamiltonswcd.org

A

## Remove disease host plants

Any garden plant, and plants or weeds within the same family of said plant, that hosted a disease (e.g. Septoria Leaf Spot on tomatoes) should be removed and disposed of either through burning or by disposing in a waste receptacle. This can help to decrease the occurrence of disease next spring.



Black Rot on grapes

B

## Terminate all other weeds and seeds

Any plant or weed should be pulled and either placed on the ground or within your compost. By placing and leaving on the ground, you are keeping the nutrients that the plant consumed within the soil and contributing to organic matter. Completely remove any plant or weed that may have gone to seed to help limit the amount of weeds in your garden in the spring.



C

## Covering the soil

Covering the soil throughout the late fall into the early spring offers four levels of benefits: 1) minimizing wind and soil erosion, 2) suppressing weed growth, 3) improving soil quality by adding organic matter, improving tilth, or adding beneficial nutrients, and 4) creating habitat for beneficial insects. There are three basic methods to achieve some or all of these benefits:

### Sheet Mulching (Inorganic)

Sheet mulching with black plastic or tarps is an effective way of suppressing weeds by blocking any photosynthetic activity. It is also effective in preventing erosion. This may also assist in the decomposition of weeds. Ensure the cover is 100% opaque and sealed well on all sides and seams.



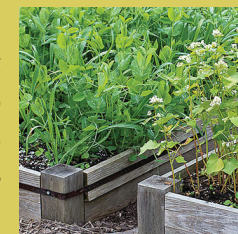
### Sheet Mulching (Organic)

This is a great way to add organic matter and protect the soil. While one layer of mulched leaves or manure would work, for example, an even better way is to create a two layers (sheets). The first layer can be cardboard and/or newspaper. The second layer can include compost, manure, old leaves, grass clippings, straw, or soil (no wood mulch). Water thoroughly. Plant like normal in the spring!



### Cover Crops

This is one of the most beneficial practices you can employ in your garden during the winter. Cover crops, like crimson clover, buckwheat, or oats, are a great way to add organic matter, improve the quality of the soil, add nutrients, and provide beneficial habitat for insects. The possibilities are endless! Contact the HCSWCD for more information about cover crops or visit [www.hamiltonswcd.org/resources](http://www.hamiltonswcd.org/resources).



Learn more at our website at [www.hamiltonswcd.org/resources](http://www.hamiltonswcd.org/resources)

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