

The Equipment of Fall

What customer's need and why you should have it available

By Linda Beattie

As the story of the ant and the grasshopper has taught us, fall is a time to prepare for winter. Any self-respecting gardener will tell you that fall is for planting. A landscaper will tell you that fall is for clean-up. And the turf care professional will tell you – you've got to care for your lawn now to insure a beautiful healthy lawn in the spring. All sage advice, and if taken each can offer benefits to the commercial dealership. From the gardener to the professional landscaper – having the right equipment for the job is essential. Is your store prepared?

Fall Is For Planting

Fall is the perfect time to plant bulbs - daffodils, narcissus, as well as crocus, scillia, chrysanthemums and tulips, just to name a few. And it's also a great time to plant trees and shrubs. The one thing your gardening and landscaping customers will surely need is a tiller. A good tiller will allow for them to dig deep enough for bulb planting – at least 6 inches deep for larger bulbs and at least 3 inches for smaller bulbs. A tree or shrub would require a few more inches in depth. So it would be best to carry tillers that can till up to 10 inches deep. The size of the tiller needed may vary by the size of the garden, but odds are the fall gardener is not looking to till over their whole yard, probably just a few smaller gardens 20 – 40 feet or planting a shrub or tree here and there and a mini or roto-tiller should work just fine for your fall gardening customers and will be of value to the professional landscaper as well. A smaller tiller would be most helpful as it is lightweight for transport and easier to control the precise depth than the big boys. You should also offer one that also cultivates to control any weeds that look to hamper their fall jewels.



A mini or roto-tiller should work just fine for your fall gardening customers and will be of value to the professional landscaper as well.

Fall is for Lawn & Turf Care



Multi-function units can overseed and dethatch simultaneously.

Experts will tell you that there is no more beneficial time to the health and maintenance of a lawn than fall. Fall maintenance allows turf time to relax, recuperate and rejuvenate from the draining conditions of summer and gives the grass the strength to survive the harsh conditions of winter. Through proper feeding, seeding, dethatching and aeration, the turf can rebound beautifully in the spring. Your customers, whether they are professional or residential will no doubt look to you for aerators, spreaders, dethatchers or turf rakes, and seeders. In turf care, versatility may pay off big! Not every customer is going to aerate a football field and not every professional is going to prepare a residential lawn for winter. So how do you have it all for the professional and the residential user and still have floor space left on the floor? Dedicated commercial equipment is necessary but sizeable, you might want to look to multifunctional equipment or attachments to save space and also offer your smaller area users the right tool for the job. Many mini or roto-tillers offer an assortment of attachments and accessories and you and your customers might just be surprised at how effective these little giants of yard and garden care are. If you stock mini-tillers take advantage of the attachments they offer – these will come in handy and offer plenty of power for the residential user and save you valuable floor space.

Fall Is For Clean-Up



The leaves that offered us cool shade all spring and summer long transform into a breathtaking colorful decent to earth that blankets everything in rustic colors. Leaves bring us so much pleasure and go on to give us compost and add to the benefits of so many other horticultural ventures come spring. From leaves to hedges – it's time to trim, rake, shred, vacuum and bag all of the debris that fall leaves behind. The number one chore of fall 'no doubt' is leaf removal. The number one mistake that consumers make is allowing for leaves to collect and decompose on their lawn through the winter months. In actuality they run the risk of smothering their lawn and hindering its growth in spring. The tools of fall clean-up are numerous and depending on your customer, you may need to stock all of the following for fall clean-up: good commercial hedge trimmers (due to the thicker tougher growth of fall), blowers (handheld, backpack and walk-behind), leaf and debris vacs, shredders and chippers, and for the commercial outfits - even truck loaders. Also remember that leaf removal is a multi-million dollar business

from the brown paper bags that line the streets on trash night to the huge loaders that reduce and deliver leaves to the municipal compost sights. It's big business to remove and recycle! Stocking all of the equipment, along with eco friendly containers for disposal, are all sure to add to your bottom line at the end of the season.

Tips For Fall Lawn Maintenance You Can Pass On To Your Customers

With the dog days of summer over – it's time to take care of the damage the heat, sun and fun, has caused lawns and prepare them for the harsh conditions of winter. Experts will tell you that the most beneficial time for your lawn is fall. And a beautiful lawn is not as hard to achieve as you might think.

There are four necessities to fall lawn care that can work to revive the fall drab and offer a beautiful thick healthy lawn come spring.



1. Mowing

Continued mowing in the fall is important, especially in the early fall. Continue mowing grass until it stops growing. If the lawn is left to grow in the fall that growth will die and cause thatch, which could choke or stump healthy growth in the spring. There is also no need to adjust the height of the mower blades, if you cut too short you could scalp the lawn and cause damage.

2. Feeding & Seeding

If you've ever been disappointed in the spring with the lack of color and fullness of your lawn, odds are it was due to improper feeding. Feeding in the fall offers the most visual affect on your lawn come spring. Seeding in the bare spots or thickening existing areas is also best done in the fall as it has the longest time and the least traffic and can take effect when spring comes around to wake it up.

3. Dethatching & Aerating



These two renovation tasks are a "should do" for most grass types to maintain a healthy lawn. Aerating and dethatching can be done pretty much any time over the course of the growing season, depending on the traffic of the area and the weather conditions, but are most beneficial when done in the fall. Dethatch first to remove dead compressed grass that chokes out nutrients, reduces water supply, and hampers growth. A lawn cannot thrive if it cannot eat, drink and breathe. If you are dethatching a large area (over 60 x 60 feet) consider a dethatcher that has a catcher bag - raking up thatch is a long and cumbersome job. Aeration is the process of putting holes or slits into the lawn to relieve the compaction of the soil and allow beneficial nutrients and water to the root system. Soil compaction is more deadly to a lawn than insects, disease and drought. Any additional benefit, if you use a core aerator, is that you can leave the cores on top of the lawn. The cores will break down and offer nourishment to the lawn over the winter months.

Any additional benefit, if you use a core aerator, is that you can leave the cores on top of the lawn to decompose.

4. Leaf Removal

A common mistake of fall is to allow whole leaves to settle and decompose on the grass. By the time the leaves have broken down you've smothered the grass and nothing beneficial has gotten to it. It's best to remove the leaves. See if your municipality picks up leaves or has a leaf dump, or possibly start a compost pile.

Fall is a time for preparation. And if there is any truth to the ant and grasshopper story, your store is about to become a very busy place...so don't procrastinate like the grasshopper; make sure your store is prepared with all of the equipment of fall.

END -

Photo's are courtesy of:

Commercial Grounds Care, Inc. of Johnson Creek, WI., manufacturer of BOB-CAT, Bunton, Ryan & Steiner products.

Schiller-Pfeiffer, Inc. of Southampton, PA., manufacturer of Little Wonder, Mantis and Classen products.