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OF TWO SCHOOLS

No denying it. Fall, then winter will happen. The leaves are changing, and with a frost/freeze warning for tonight we will be well aware of the change. The gardens are naturally preparing for the seasonal change and sometimes need a little help.

There are many people who think that the gardens should be meticulously cleaned up. Cutting off leaves, stems, and seed heads of perennials, shrubs cut back and annuals removed. In doing this you do remove a lot of decaying debris that can easily harbor disease and insects. It always looks so much better with everything tucked in all neat and tidy.

Having this done certainly makes the start of spring gardening a little easier. I do agree with certain aspects of this philosophy.



On the other hand, many people leave everything that has seeds or other food source for the wildlife. They believe very strongly in not scouring the garden of the debris from the summer. To me this method can sometimes look a little

scraggly and unkempt. But I totally agree with leaving as

much food source as I can in the garden. It's entertaining in the winter to watch the many different species of small birds enjoy picking at seed heads and ground food.

Both of these clean-up philosophies have their merits. I definitely clean up very well under my roses, making sure to remove dead canes, too, and cutting back only perennials that have no food source. The garden most concentrated on to be neat and tidy is the one I see constantly from my house. The other borders and gardens are not in constant view so they are left to be a little wild, free, and crazy. They really don't mind that much, and neither do I.

