



DESIGN. CRAFT. PRESERVE.

OUTDOOR WINTERIZATION CHECKLIST

PHASE 1:

LAWN & TURF CARE

- ☐ **Adjust final mowing height (2.0 to 2.5 inches):**
Sharpen mower blades and cut the grass down to this range on the final pass to prevent pink and gray snow mold while protecting the root crown from frost damage.
- ☐ **Manage leaf litter:**
Mulch light-to-moderate leaves directly into the turf to return nutrients to the soil; rake or bag heavy leaf mats completely so grass is not smothered under snow.
- ☐ **Apply late-season winterizer fertilizer:**
Broadcast a quick-release nitrogen fertilizer after top-growth ceases but before the soil freezes to promote carbohydrate storage in root systems.
- ☐ **Dormant overseed bare patches:**
Distribute cool-season grass seed over high-traffic or thin areas right before the first lasting snowfall so freeze-thaw cycles settle the seed for early spring germination.

PHASE 2:

HARDSCAPE & DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT

- ☐ **Clear retaining wall weep holes:**
Remove all dirt, leaves, and debris from wall drainage outlets to prevent trapped water from freezing and bowing blocks.
- ☐ **Extend water discharge lines:**
Confirm that downspout extensions, channel drains, and catch basins direct runoff at least five feet away from patio foundations and retaining walls.
- ☐ **Sweep and compact paver joints:**
Refill eroded paver joints with fresh joint sand to create a tight barrier against water penetration into the aggregate base.
- ☐ **Stock hardscape-safe-de-icing materials:**
Avoid rock salt (sodium chloride); source calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), potassium chloride, or coarse traction sand to prevent paver flaking and spalling.

PHASE 3:

IRRIGATION & OUTDOOR LIVING FEATURES



Complete a high-volume irrigation blowout:

Hire a professional utilizing a high-CFM tow-behind compressor (regulated under 50 PSI) to evacuate lines, valves, and backflow preventers, then isolate the indoor shutoff valve.



Winterize outdoor kitchens:

Shut off dedicated interior water supply valves, drain exterior plumbing, leave outdoor faucets open, deep-clean cooking surfaces to deter pests, and secure vinyl covers.



Secure fire features:

Turn off gas at the key valve or propane tank, clear debris from burner pans, and install a rigid protective cover over burner assemblies.



Store water feature pumps:

Pull submersible pumps from ponds and waterfalls, clean the pump housings, and store them indoors submerged in a bucket of water to preserve mechanical seals.



Drain fountains:

Drain, dry, and tarp decorative stone fountains.

PHASE 4:

TREES, SHRUBS & PERENNIAL PROTECTION



Deep-soak evergreens:

Thoroughly water all broadleaf and needle evergreens in late October before the ground freezes solid to defend against winter desiccation.



Apply winter burn protection:

Erect burlap windbreaks on north- and west-facing exposures, or apply anti-desiccant spray to sensitive evergreen foliage.



Install trunk guards on young trees:

Place white plastic spiral guards from ground level to the lowest branches on smooth-barked trees (fruit trees, maples, honey locusts) to prevent rodent girdling and sunscald.



Deploy deer defenses:

Spray arborvitae, hydrangeas, and hostas with weather-resistant repellent, or build framed deer netting around vulnerable specimens.



Mulch perennial beds:

Spread a 3- to 4-inch layer of organic wood mulch over root zones and perennial beds to insulate against frost-heaving, keeping mulch pulled back 3 inches from tree and shrub trunks.

If you need assistance winterizing your residential or commercial property, or if you want to begin planning your spring landscape construction project, reach out to the team at Boulder Creek Outdoor Living today.



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