

Get Yards Ready For Fall With Six Tips From TurfMutt

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For more than a decade, the TurfMutt environmental education and stewardship program has advocated the importance of managed landscapes and other green space as critical to human health and happiness. Since 2009, The TurfMutt Foundation has reached more than 70 million children, educators, and families. The program is directed by the [Outdoor Power Equipment Institute](#) (OPEI), which provides tips and reminders to help families and backyard enthusiasts stay safe when using outdoor power equipment.

This year is different, reports OPEI, as the world experiences a paradigm shift in how we live our everyday lives.



Mutt Mulligan (or “Mo-Mo”), the TurfMutt spokesdog, with her human, Kris Kiser, President of the TurfMutt Foundation.

“Due to the pandemic, we are all re-discovering the importance of connecting to the outdoors. We’re seeing record sales in yard and garden equipment and supplies, and more interest in working and living surrounded by green space,” said Kris Kiser, President of OPEI and the [TurfMutt Foundation](#). “People want

their own section of the outdoors, and they see how a yard can both keep us safe and help us connect with one another.

“Your patch of grass outside your back door is not only a safe space for you, your family and pets, but it’s also part of the larger ecosystem,” he continued. “By taking care of our personal green spaces, we are taking care of the planet.”

Here are six tips from [Mutt Mulligan](#), a rescue dog and the spokesdog of the TurfMutt Foundation, to get yards ready for fall and winter:

1. **Be purposeful in how you maintain your landscape.** Many people are sprucing up their yards for fall entertaining and adding trees and shrubs. If adding a tree or bush, consider location, maintenance, sunlight and watering needs, as well as how it might support local pollinators in the spring and backyard wildlife over the winter.
2. **Plan how to manage leaves.** Mulching leaves and leaving them on the grass – rather than raking and bagging them – is good for the lawn and the environment. As shredded leaves decompose, they feed it naturally. If you need a mulching attachment or want a mulching mower, now is the time to shop.



3. **Keep your lawn healthy by aerating it.** Aeration prevents soil from becoming compacted and covered with thatch, a thick layer of roots, stems, and debris that blocks water, oxygen and nutrients from reaching the soil.
4. **Get out equipment and assess your needs for fall yard work.** Clean and inspect your mower, trimmer, leaf blower, pruner, or hedger. Get out attachments needed for fall like an aerator or mulching attachment. Take any equipment that needs it to an authorized service representative.
5. **Continue to mow during the fall season.** You should cut the grass until the first hard frost. Find the just-right length for your yard’s species, typically between 2-3 inches, to keep the grass healthy when it turns cold.
6. **Check if trees or bushes need pruning.** Look for low-hanging branches that might snap or break in the winter and cause damage. Now is the time to trim them. Call a tree service if needed.

Through classroom materials developed with Scholastic, TurfMutt teaches students and teachers how to “save the planet, one yard at a time.” TurfMutt is an official USGBC® Education Partner and part of their global LEARNING LAB. TurfMutt is an education resource at the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency, Green Apple, the Center for Green Schools, the Outdoors Alliance for Kids, the National Energy Education Development (NEED) project, Climate Change Live, Petfinder and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 2017, the TurfMutt animated video series won the coveted Cynopsis Kids Imagination Award for Best Interstitial Series.