



## Checklist for Cleaning Up an Ornamental Planting Bed (Perennials & Ornamental Shrubs)

### Tools & Equipment Needed

#### ✓ Hand Tools:

- Hand pruners (bypass pruners for live wood, anvil pruners for dead wood)
- Loppers (for thicker branches)
- Hedge shears (for pruning grasses)
- Garden knife or hori-hori (for dividing perennials or cutting away debris)
- Hand rake or cultivator (for light surface cleanup and aeration)

#### ✓ Larger Tools:

- Garden rake (for collecting debris)
- Leaf rake (for light debris removal in mulch)
- Shovel (for dividing perennials or replanting)
- Pitchfork (for moving mulch or compost)
- Wheelbarrow or garden cart (for hauling debris)

#### ✓ Other Supplies:

- Bucket or tarp (for collecting plant debris)
- Mulch (if replenishing)
- Compost or slow-release fertilizer
- Gloves (to protect hands)
- Safety glasses (for pruning work)

## Step-by-Step Cleanup Process

### 1. Assess the Bed

- ☑ Walk through and evaluate plant health. Identify dead, diseased, or overgrown plants.
- ☑ Check for pests or diseases on plants.
- ☑ Look for areas with excessive mulch, weeds, or erosion.

### 2. Remove Dead Plant Material & Prune

- ☑ **Cut back perennials:** Remove dead stems from last year's growth. Leave 1-2" stubs if needed for regrowth.
- ☑ **Prune ornamental shrubs:** Remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches. Lightly shape if necessary.
- ☑ **Divide perennials if needed:** Dig up and split overcrowded plants like daylilies, hostas, or irises.

- ☑ **Deadhead spent blooms:** Trim off old flowers to encourage new growth.
- ☑ **Cut down ornamental grasses:** Leave 4-6” stubs for new growth in spring.

### **3. Remove Weeds & Unwanted Growth**

- ☑ Pull out weeds by the roots to prevent regrowth.
- ☑ Use a garden knife or cultivator for stubborn weeds.
- ☑ Check for invasive species that may have crept in.

### **4. Clean Up Debris & Improve Soil**

- ☑ Rake out leaves, sticks, and plant debris.
- ☑ Lightly loosen soil around perennials to improve aeration.
- ☑ Apply compost or slow-release fertilizer for soil enrichment.

### **5. Edge & Define the Bed**

- ☑ Use a shovel or half-moon edger to redefine bed edges.
- ☑ Remove grass or encroaching plants along borders.
- ☑ Add a neat edge with a rake or edging tool.

### **6. Mulch & Final Touches**

- ☑ Replenish mulch if needed (2-3” deep, keeping it away from plant crowns).
- ☑ Check irrigation if installed (ensure it’s working properly).
- ☑ Water plants if necessary, especially newly divided perennials.
- ☑ Step back and assess the overall look—make any final touch-ups.

### **Post-Cleanup Actions**

- ☑ Properly dispose of or compost plant debris.
- ☑ Clean and store tools to prevent rust.
- ☑ Plan for any new plantings or adjustments needed.

This checklist ensures a thorough and efficient cleanup while promoting healthy plant growth for the upcoming season! 🌿✨