Beary Landscaping Adjusts Fall Cleanup Plans as Leaf Drop May Run Late

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Beary Landscaping is adjusting its fall cleanup schedules for commercial properties and homeowners associations after the Morton Arboretum said a strengthening El Niño may delay and compress this year's fall color season. The shift could push leaf drop closer to the start of winter weather across the region the company serves.

In a Sept. 22, 2026 outlook reported by NBC Chicago, scientists at the Lisle-based Morton Arboretum said El Niño is expected to bring warmer than average temperatures to October, November, and December, citing National Weather Service projections. Christy Rollinson, senior scientist in forest ecology at the Arboretum, said those conditions are expected to delay autumn color in general, with leaves changing quickly once several freezing nights arrive. The Arboretum added that above average rainfall over the preceding 90 days may have offset earlier drought conditions that would typically bring color sooner.

Municipal leaf programs in the area already extend well into the season. The Village of Oak Park's 2026 fall leaf collection program runs from Oct. 26 through Dec. 18, according to the village's public works department, and the village has asked residents to make sure their landscape contractors know that leaves may no longer

be placed in the street.

For commercial and association properties, a later and more concentrated leaf drop can narrow the window between the last leaves falling and the first snow. Beary Landscaping said it is responding by reviewing fall cleanup timing with each property before the end of the standard maintenance season.

Most of the company?s landscape maintenance contracts run through Nov. 30, and the fall cleanups included in those agreements are scheduled within that period. Beary Landscaping said it will review leaf conditions with property managers and association boards before the contract season closes. If a late leaf drop leaves significant leaf cover on a property after Nov. 30, the property can arrange an additional late fall cleanup in December under a separate agreement.

Beary Landscaping also said turf and bed winterization will follow the final cleanup on each site, so that late season turf work and bed preparation are completed on ground that has been cleared of leaf cover.

"A late leaf drop does not change the goal, which is getting every property into winter clean," said Rob Pelino at Beary Landscaping. "Our contracted cleanups wrap up by the end of November, so the conversation with each property manager needs to happen before then. If the trees are still holding leaves at that point, we lay out the option of an additional late fall cleanup in December so each property can decide what makes sense for its site."

Because Beary Landscaping also provides snow and ice removal, the company said coordinating the final fall cleanup with the transition to winter services is a scheduling priority for clients who use both.

Founded in 1985 and headquartered in Lockport, Ill., Beary Landscaping provides landscape maintenance, seasonal color enhancements, snow and ice removal, tree and arbor care, landscape design, landscape lighting, and residential and commercial landscape construction. The company serves more than 10,000 clients each year, with a current focus on commercial accounts. Beary Landscaping is a member of the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, the National Association of Landscape Professionals, and the Snow & Ice Management Association, and has received the BBB Sign of Excellence Award and recognition in the Unilock Awards of Excellence.

More information is available at https://bearylandscaping.com.

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Beary Landscaping

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