



## Philip Nastasi Jr

REALTOR®, ABR®, SRES®

DRE # 01892875

Rodeo Realty Inc

Phone: 818-489-1960

[pnastjr@justtheperfecthome.com](mailto:pnastjr@justtheperfecthome.com)

[WWW.JUSTTHEPERFECTHOME.COM](http://WWW.JUSTTHEPERFECTHOME.COM)

## Just Leave It! The Benefits of Leaves in Your Yard

New research shows a simple truth: your lawn wants you to let autumn leaves stay put, settle in, and work their magic. And yes—your grass will thank you for it.

**Mulching is the Secret:** Let's be clear: we're not saying leave your lawn buried under knee-high drifts of leaves. The trick is mulching. Simply running over the leaves with a mower breaks them into smaller pieces that settle naturally into the grass. This keeps your lawn healthy without smothering it and also speeds up decomposition. A mulched layer looks neat, nourishes the soil, and saves you hours of raking—making it a win for both your lawn and your Saturday schedule. Mulching with your lawnmower also keeps whole leaves from clogging neighborhood drainage pipes.

### Natural (and FREE) Fertilizer:

Leaves are nutrient-dense and they release nitrogen, carbon and trace minerals back into the soil. They also feed microorganisms to support lawn growth.

### Soil Protection from Winter

**Damage:** Wind, frost, and shifting temperatures can break

down the top layer of soil, leaving your grass struggling to recover in the spring. A layer of leaves acts like a warm blanket, shielding the earth and maintaining healthier moisture levels underneath.

### Leaves Support Beneficial Insect

**Life:** Leaves are a micro-system that provide winter homes for caterpillars, beetles, butterflies and more. These insects are critical for pollination and biodiversity necessary for spring growth.

**Wildlife Depend on Leaves:** Toads, small mammals, salamanders, and beneficial insects rely on leaf cover for shelter, moisture, and protection from predators. An overly tidy lawn is a barren landscape for these creatures, effectively pushing them out. But when we embrace a more natural-looking lawn, we strengthen our local ecosystem. A leaf-friendly yard supports everything from fireflies to friendly garden pollinators, turning your home into a safe haven instead of a wasteland.

**Ditch the Plastic:** Not raking and collecting leaves in giant plastic bags is much better for the planet. The less plastic used the better.

## October Calendar

October 12 - Columbus Day

October 16 - Boss's Day

October 31 - Halloween

October is Fire Prevention Month

## Homeowner Tips



### Shake It Off!

Try this simple technique for more efficiency from your clothes dryer: shake every item as you remove it from the washing machine to put it in the dryer.

- Shaking clothes before drying prevents clumps so air flows better and loads finish faster.
- Shaken clothes will wrinkle less and dry more.
- Saves energy and clothes last longer.

## Your Safety & Maintenance List for October

**HVAC Maintenance:** Hire a pro for a heating system tune-up to ensure efficiency before cold weather arrives. (9/1 - 11/30 is the Pre-Season Tune-Up Period for FNHW home warranties with this option)

**Fireplace Inspection:** Schedule a chimney sweep to remove creosote and ensure it is safe to use.

**Safety Detectors:** Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries.

**Dryer Vent Cleaning:** Clean lint buildup to reduce fire risks.

**Gutter Cleaning:** Clear falling debris to prevent clogs that cause ice dams and roof damage.

**Seal Gaps:** Check caulk and weatherstripping on windows and doors to keep heat in and pests out.

**Water Source Shutdown:** Drain and turn off exterior faucets and irrigation systems to prevent frozen pipes.

**Roof Inspection:** Check for damaged or missing shingles before winter storms

**Window Care:** Swap screens for storm windows to increase insulation and let in more light.

**Moisture Check:** Inspect the attic and basement for leaks or water damage from autumn rains.



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## Classic Minestrone Soup

A hearty, rustic soup popular to Roman peasants in 2nd century BC and still popular today. (Recipe serves 6)

### INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium red onion, chopped  
2 medium carrots, peeled and diced  
1 large potato  
1 large celery stalk, diced  
¼ teaspoon red-pepper flakes  
1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary  
Coarse salt and ground pepper  
1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes (drained)  
¼ head cabbage thinly sliced  
1 can rinsed/drained cannellini beans  
½ pound green beans (1" long)  
1 garlic clove, minced (optional)  
¼ cup thinly sliced fresh basil  
¾ cup grated Parmesan, for serving

### DIRECTIONS

In a large pot, heat oil; add onion, carrots, celery, red-pepper flakes, rosemary, 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Cook until onions are gold. Add tomatoes, potato, cabbage, cannellini beans, and 7 cups water; bring to a boil. Stir in green beans. Reduce to a simmer, and cook until all the vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper; stir in garlic, if using, and basil. Serve sprinkled with Parmesan and crusty sour dough bread.

