FREE FIELD GUIDE · FALL 2026

THE FALL CASH PLAN

How to price your cleanups right, book them before everybody else, and walk into winter with money in the bank.



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Price it. Book it. Bank it. A 12-week calendar, a pricing method, and the exact scripts. No theory.

READ THIS FIRST

You're tired. It's the end of August. You've been in the heat since April. The leaves haven't even dropped yet.

Here's the truth: **the next 12 weeks are the best money of the whole season.** Most owners leave half of it on the table. Not because they're lazy. Because they're too worn out to plan.

Then the phone stops ringing. And January gets stressful.

This plan is simple. It's how I run fall and set up winter. Not a course. Not theory. A calendar, a pricing method, and scripts you can copy today.

Do this stuff and your fall will be different. Your winter too.

LET'S GO.

THE FALL MONEY MATH

Three things are true every single year:

1. **Fall cleanups can pay better per hour than mowing — when they're priced and routed right.** Same equipment. Same guys. More money per stop. Treat leaf season like a real product, not a favor.

2. **Booking early is an edge.** Most folks go with whoever shows up first. Be in front of your customers in September and the job is usually yours. Wait, and you're competing with the door-hanger guy.

3. **Winter is only a hole if you don't fill it.** Most small businesses run thin on cash. Fall is when you build the cushion. Not December.

THAT'S THE WHOLE GAME. PRICE IT. BOOK IT. BANK IT.

THE 12-WEEK CALENDAR



WEEKS 1-2 NOW → EARLY SEPTEMBER · BUILD THE PRICE SHEET AND THE LIST

- Write your **fall cleanup price sheet** (method below). Three tiers. No "I'll get back to you."
- Pull your customer list. Every weekly and biweekly account. That's your first 30 to 100 cleanup jobs right there.
- Pick your **early-book deadline** (I use September 30). Book early = first on the route. A small discount works too if it's built into the price.
- Text or call every customer. Script below. Don't wait for them to ask.

WEEKS 3-4 MID TO LATE SEPTEMBER · PRE-BOOK

- Hit everybody who didn't answer: "Filling up the fall route this week, want your spot?"
- New cleanup customers only on streets you already work. **Route density is where the profit is.** A 20-minute drive for one cleanup kills the margin.
- Post the offer on your business page and your personal page. A full trailer of leaves beats any stock photo.
- Book **add-ons** on the same visit: aeration and overseed, gutters, shrub trim, bed cleanouts, mulch. One trip, three invoices.

WEEKS 5-6 EARLY OCTOBER · LOCK THE CALENDAR, SELL WINTER

- Deadline hits. Close the list. Latecomers pay full price and go to the back of the line.
- Now sell **winter** to the same customers. Pick ONE lane (options below). Package it: "Fall cleanup plus snow" or "plus holiday lights." They already trust you. Use it.
- Call your commercial accounts. Property managers are picking winter contracts right now.

WEEKS 7-8 MID TO LATE OCTOBER · PREP AND HOLD YOUR PRICE

- Blowers serviced. Decks set. Bagging setup ready. Dump site figured out now, not in a scramble.
- **Hold your price.** The neighbor charging less? Let him. He'll be out of business by spring.
- Confirm every job by text the week before. Fewer no-shows.

WEEKS 9-10 NOVEMBER · EXECUTE LEAF SEASON

- Big trees = two visits. One mid-season, one final. Priced as two jobs.
- **No free re-dos.** Leaves fall after you leave. That's a second visit, not a complaint.
- Before and after photo on every job. Text it with the invoice. Ask for a review while they're happy.
- Get paid on the spot or same day. Money that drags into January is how winter gets scary.

WEEKS 11-12 LATE NOVEMBER → DECEMBER · CLOSE THE YEAR

- Collect everything owed. Every dollar.
- Move your winter reserve to a separate account (rule below). Don't look at it.
- Start your winter lane the week after your last cleanup. No dead gap.
- Pre-book spring. "Want me to put you on the schedule for spring cleanup and weekly mowing?" Yes or no, right there. **You'll start next season half sold.**





HOW TO PRICE CLEANUPS

Everybody says leaves are hard to estimate. That's true — if you're estimating leaves. Don't. Estimate **time and hauling**. Sell **tiers**.

STEP 1: KNOW YOUR NUMBER

Your cleanup rate is not your mowing rate. Cleanups are heavier, dirtier, and you're hauling. Work it out once:

WORKSHEET — FILL IT IN

Your crew cost per hour (wages + taxes + insurance)	$ _____
Your equipment and truck cost per hour	$ _____
Your overhead per hour (insurance, phone, software, etc.)	$ _____
= Your break-even per hour	$ _____
+ Profit (I use 30% minimum on cleanups)	$ _____
= YOUR CLEANUP HOURLY RATE	$ _____

That number is your floor. Most guys find out they've been doing cleanups for mowing money. Don't be that guy.

STEP 2: ADD HAULING

Dump fees. Drive time. Trailer time. Charge it as a line item: **"Haul-away: $___ per load."** Customers get it. The ones who don't can bag it themselves.

STEP 3: SELL THREE TIERS, NOT A CUSTOM QUOTE

TIER	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	HOW TO PRICE IT
LIGHT	Few trees, mostly grass, one pass with the mower and blower	**Flat rate.** Roughly 2× your weekly mow price.
STANDARD	Normal suburban lot, some trees, beds need blowing out, one load hauled	**Flat rate.** Your hourly rate × estimated hours + one haul.
HEAVY	Big trees, deep leaves, multiple loads, two visits	**Hourly with a minimum.** State the minimum up front.

Customer picks a tier. Done in 30 seconds. No walking the yard twice. No "let me get back to you."

STEP 4: WRITE IT DOWN AND SAY IT THE SAME WAY EVERY TIME

"Fall cleanup starts at **$___** for a light lot, most yards run **$___ to $___**, and heavy leaf lots are hourly with a **$___** minimum. Which one sounds like your yard?"

That's it. That's the whole pitch.

SCRIPTS YOU CAN COPY

TEXT TO CURRENT CUSTOMERS · WEEK 1

Hey [NAME], it's [YOUR NAME] with [COMPANY]. Fall cleanups are opening up and I'm filling the route now. Your yard is usually a [TIER] which runs about $___. Want me to lock in your spot before it fills? Just reply YES.

FOLLOW-UP · WEEK 3

[NAME], last call for early fall cleanup spots, I'm closing the list on [DATE]. Want in?

SOCIAL POST · BUSINESS PAGE AND PERSONAL PAGE

Fall cleanups are booking now. If you've had me on your lawn this year, reply or message me and I'll get you on the route before it fills. New customers on [NEIGHBORHOODS] welcome too. [PHOTO OF A FULL TRAILER]



WINTER PACKAGE · WEEK 5

[NAME], while I've got you on the fall schedule, I'm also lining up [snow / holiday lights / winter service] for this year. Want me to add you so you're not scrambling when it hits? Fall plus winter package is $___.

WHEN SOMEBODY SAYS YOUR PRICE IS TOO HIGH

Totally fair. I price it so it gets done right the first time and you don't see me back for a re-do. If budget's tight, we can do a light pass instead of a full cleanup. Want me to price that?

WINTER: PICK ONE LANE AND SELL IT NOW

Winter is not the time to figure out winter. October is.

You don't need five winter services. You need ONE that fits your area, your equipment, and your guys:

WINTER LANE	GOOD FIT IF	WATCH OUT FOR
Snow and ice	You're in a snow market and already have a plow-capable truck or can get one	Unpredictable. You need contracts (seasonal or per-push with a minimum), not just "call me when it snows."
Holiday lighting	You have ladders, a crew, and customers with nice houses	Install window is tight (Halloween to Thanksgiving). Sell it in October or you missed it. Takedowns run into February which is a nice second paycheck.
Late cleanups and gutter cleaning	Warm-ish market where leaves keep dropping into December	Cap it. At some point you're chasing $80 jobs in the cold.
Pressure washing and hardscape prep	Southern or mild markets	Slower sales cycle. Start pitching in fall.
Firewood, Christmas tree hauling, junk removal	You need to keep guys paid and don't care about margin	Low margin. It's a labor-retention play, not a profit play. Know that going in.

RULE Whatever lane you pick, sell it to your fall customers first. **That's the easiest sale you'll make all year.**

THE WINTER RESERVE RULE

Fall money feels like a lot. It's not. **It's fall AND winter money.**

Every time a cleanup check clears, move **25 to 30 percent** into a separate account. Do it the day the money lands. Not at the end of the month. Then don't touch it.

By December you've got a real cushion. Your guys get paid on time. You're making decisions instead of reacting.

That's what **"money in the bank when the grass stops growing"** actually means.

THE ONE-PAGE CHECKLIST

PRINT THIS PAGE. PUT IT IN THE TRUCK.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Cleanup price sheet written (3 tiers + hauling)
- [ ] Early-book deadline picked
- [ ] Every current customer texted

BY END OF SEPTEMBER

- [ ] Follow-up sent to everyone who didn't answer
- [ ] Cleanup offer posted (with a real photo)
- [ ] Add-ons offered on every booking

BY MID-OCTOBER

- [ ] Early-book list closed
- [ ] ONE winter lane chosen
- [ ] Winter package offered to every fall customer
- [ ] Commercial accounts called

BY END OF OCTOBER

- [ ] Equipment prepped, dump site set
- [ ] Every job confirmed by text
- [ ] Price held

NOVEMBER

- [ ] Two-visit model on big-tree lots
- [ ] Before/after photo + review ask on every job
- [ ] Paid same day

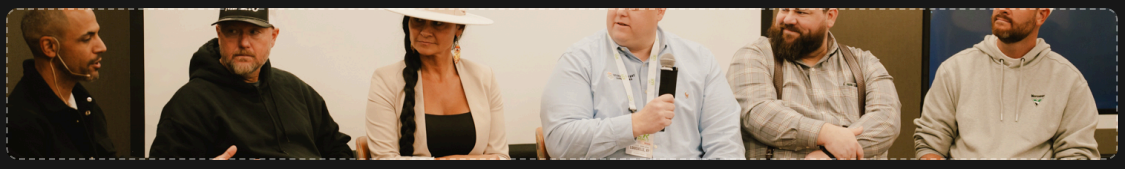
DECEMBER

- [ ] Everything collected
- [ ] Winter reserve moved
- [ ] Winter lane started
- [ ] Spring pre-booked

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK SO HARD FOR SO LITTLE

You read this far, so you already know your business can make more than it does now. The gap isn't hustle. You've got plenty of that. **The gap is a plan, better pricing, and being early.**

That's what this is. Run it this fall and tell me how it goes. I read the messages.



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STOP GUESSING. START BUILDING.

— Naylor

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