

January in the Garden

Planning

When planning your next garden or landscaping redesign, consider putting in more plants that attract bees, butterflies and moths and replace old and overgrown plants with native shrubs. Drought resistant plants are good for the garden and water budget.

When it is too cold for working in the garden, curl up by the fire with your favorite seed catalogs, dream of the spring to come, and plan to grow something different!

Review what vegetables you grew and their locations last year; make a crop rotation plan for the upcoming planting season. Avoid planting tomatoes, potatoes or eggplants in the same beds as they are all susceptible to the same bugs and diseases.

Plan to buy locally whenever possible from the many fine nurseries in our area. Reputable nurseries stock plants that are rated for our growing zones and have experts to help you choose.

Take note of interesting trees and shrubs, bark textures, berries and seed heads and plan a winter garden for next year. Pay special attention to plantings that bring color, textures and architectural form to the winter landscape.

If your lawn is frozen, try to avoid walking on it or over the same areas. You may find bald spots in your lawn in the spring if you do!

Planting

In mid to late January, it is possible to sow slow-germinating seeds, such as petunias, snapdragons, pansies and petunias indoors. But it will be necessary to use fluorescent lights and be certain to use a sterile seed starting mix.

Inside and Out

Don't forget to water your houseplants, but avoid *overwatering* them during the winter. They don't need as much water or fertilizer when the daytime light and temperatures are lower than usual. Watch for cold drafts from doors or windows.

If we get a January "thaw", evergreens and rhododendrons may need a good soaking to help alleviate the symptoms of winter burn.

Keep bird feeders filled with bird seed. Clean out birdhouses and boxes so your guests will not become sick or spread disease. Keep feeders clean as well.

Lawn and Garden

To prevent damage to branches from heavy snow, gently dislodge snow from trees and shrubs with a broom using an upward motion.

Give those hard working tools some care and attention. Scrub spades, forks, and shovels with hot water, dry thoroughly, and wipe over with an oiled cloth to prevent rusting.

Make sure all outdoor pets have a source of clean, thawed water and a warm, dry place to get out of the elements.

Check with your Extension Office or with your local Parks Department to find out about the Master Gardener volunteer programs, gardening clubs, plant societies or other organizations for gardeners. Meeting with other gardeners and exchanging ideas is always fun, particularly in the non-gardening months. Local Extension Offices are also an excellent source for gardening classes, and to get help with your gardening problems.