

Garden Activities from Your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers- Whole year

January:

Trees and Shrubs - For winter interest in your landscape, birch trees, crape myrtle, deciduous magnolia, coral bark maple, kousa and red-twig dogwood, stewartia, and trident maple all have interesting bark.

For winter blooms, plant flowering quince, witch hazel, and leatherleaf mahonia.

Prune trees and shrubs while they are dormant with the exception of those that bloom in the spring. They should be pruned just after they bloom. Evergreen shrubs can also be pruned late this month.

Be sure to water evergreens before the soil freezes if severe weather is forecast, because the roots are not able to take up water when the soil is frozen.

When pruning, make sure that your tools are sharp. For large branches, first cut through the bark on the underside of the limb to be pruned to keep it from tearing the bark. Next, cut from the top, close but not flush with the trunk. The swelling at the base of each branch is the branch collar and this should not be cut.

Plant ornamental trees and shrubs this month if the soil is not frozen.

Watch for borers, over-wintering insects, and scale on broadleaf evergreen trees, fruit trees, shrubs, roses, and perennials. Apply dormant oil spray when these pests are detected, always following label directions.

Water trees and shrubs during dry periods.

Prune nandinas any time between now and early spring by cutting out one third of the oldest canes.

Shrubs such as forsythia, spirea, and kerria can be divided now.

Flowerbeds - Watch for poison ivy when working outdoors. Even though the vine is leafless this time of the year, the branches can still cause a powerful reaction if accidentally touched.

If you have *Helleborus orientalis* (Lenten rose) planted in your garden – look for blooms beginning now to mid-spring.

To encourage new blooms, deadhead pansies (remove spent blossoms) and fertilize monthly with fertilizer that contains nitrate nitrogen (best for plants growing in cold soils).

Water outside containers planted with pansies and evergreens regularly.

Vegetables - If you have not already done so, prepare your vegetable garden area for spring planting when the ground is frost free and not soggy. Apply lime if your soil test indicates that you should. Contact your County Extension office for soil test directions.

The New Year is an exciting time to reevaluate your life and your garden. Cold days are great for sitting by a fire and planning your spring landscape changes and vegetable garden.

Request mail-order seed and plant catalogs and order seeds for starting indoors.

If the ground is dry, till soil in your vegetable garden to help eliminate insects and weeds and incorporate manure or compost to get the soil in good shape for spring plantings.

Houseplants - Remove amaryllis stems with the faded blooms. Keep it indoors with your houseplants then plant it outdoors in May.

Use water at room temperature when watering houseplants. Spray houseplants with insecticidal soap if you detect spider mites, mealy bugs, or scale on the leaves, always following label directions.

Give houseplants a half turn every month so they do not become misshapen.

Repot houseplants as needed and fertilize using a water-soluble fertilizer at eight-week intervals at half the recommended strength.

Miscellaneous - Now is a good time to install edgings around flowerbeds and construct walls, terraces, and walkways, when weather permits.

Instead of salt, use sand on icy walks and driveways. Salt can damage plants and lawns.

Have your lawnmower serviced so it will be ready when you are for spring grass cutting.

Inventory your garden tools and replace or repair as necessary. Sharpen your tools and clean rust from them with steel wool. Coat blades with a light oil and rub linseed oil on wooden handles to help preserve them.

Chop unwanted bamboo and English ivy to the ground. Follow up with weed killer on the leaves in April. More than one application of weed killer may be necessary, always follow label directions.

February

Trees and Shrubs - Forsythia and quince are easy to force into bloom indoors. Cut branches when the buds show a touch of color and place them in a vase of water. They should bloom within a week or so.

February is a good month to plant and transplant trees and shrubs.

Prune flowering shrubs that flower before May just after they bloom; prune those that bloom after May prior to spring growth.

Prune apple and pear trees.

Continue dormant pruning; prune out any tree branches that are crossed, broken, or diseased.

Observe Arbor Day by planting a tree on February 21st. In Georgia, Arbor Day is celebrated the third Friday in February.

Fertilize established ornamental trees and shrubs always following label directions.

Cut back butterfly bush to 12-18 inches to promote thicker growth and more blooms.

Check the mulch around your landscape plants and add some if necessary.

Trees and shrubs should have about a six-inch-thick covering layer of mulch.

Prune overgrown broadleaf shrubs late this month.

Prune evergreens. Do not severely prune pines, spruce, or junipers as they are unable to generate new growth from old wood.

If necessary, prune crepe myrtle by selecting 3, 5, or 7 main stems. Prune old seed heads and twiggy growth that grows from the base of the plant.

Prune Clematis armandii immediately after it blooms.

Flowerbeds - Fertilize spring bulbs as they emerge with 10-10-10, following label directions. Note gaps in plantings and plan fall bulb order.

Prune ornamental grasses down to 12-18 inches to expose base of clump to sunshine.

Prune climbing roses after the first flush of blooms. Now is a good time to tie main canes to a support before they leaf out and remove any stray canes.

Divide ground covers that have become too thick and prune back liriope before new spring growth begins by setting your lawn mower to its highest setting and cut.

Look for blooms on your Lenten rose (*Hellebores orientalis*).

Keep faded flowers and weak growth removed from pansies and keep them well watered and fertilized.

Soil Test - Take soil samples from your garden area in order to plan your fertilizer program. Contact your County Extension Agent for instructions on having your soil tested.

Prepare vegetable garden area for planting. Add fertilizer and lime if indicated by your soil test.

Houseplants - An occasional lukewarm bath in the sink or shower is a tonic for houseplants that overwinter in hot, dry rooms.

When the weather is extremely cold, close the window shades or place protective cardboard between houseplants and window glass to protect houseplants.

Compost - Add any remaining leaves and garden debris to your compost pile if you have one. If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Miscellaneous - Clean out the old nesting materials in your bluebird boxes early in the month and they will be ready when the bluebirds are ready to nest.

Feed birds and provide them with a fresh supply of water.

Use cat litter or sand on icy sidewalks instead of salt. Too much salt can burn nearby plant roots.

Service your lawn mower so it will be ready when you are for spring grass cutting.

March

Trees and Shrubs - Complete all major pruning by mid-March. Maple trees bleed sap when pruned, so it's better to wait until late April.

Do not prune spring flowering shrubs like forsythia and quince until after they have bloomed, or you will not get any blooms this year.

Only prune crape myrtles if needed, removing any suckers, cross branches and dead branches.

Prune roses back to about half their present size before buds break and begin fertilizing as buds break.

Fertilize trees and shrubs following label instructions in March and follow with an application in early May and early June.

Cut back your butterfly bush to half the size you want it to become this summer.

Plant bare-root roses in soil that contains organic matter that has been thoroughly tilled.

Pull mulch at least six inches away from tree trunks to prevent soggy conditions and possible disease or insect damage.

Plant broadleaf evergreens and prune evergreen shrubs back to a manageable size before new growth starts.

Purchase azaleas when they are in bloom so you will be sure of the color you are buying.

Vegetables - Start planting cool season vegetables in late March – carrots, radishes, lettuce, collards, English peas, spinach, and beets. Warm season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, corn and okra should be planted after the soil temperature warms up and the danger of frost has passed.

Start vegetables and summer annual seeds indoors. Your seedlings will be ready to transplant into your garden after the soil temperature warms up in six to eight weeks.

Planting the same vegetables in the same spot in your garden year after year can lead to an accumulation of insects and or diseases in your soil. To avoid this problem, rotate your crops.

Flowerbeds - Divide overgrown hostas, daylilies and other perennials and ground covers as needed when you see the leaves unfurling above ground.

Dig up the new flowerbeds you plan to plant this spring when the soil is not soggy and mix in plenty of organic matter.

Rejuvenate the pansies you planted last fall by fertilizing them with a water- soluble fertilizer as the temperature warms up.

English ivy can be very invasive. Good ground-cover substitutes include ajuga, mondo grass and creeping raspberry.

Avoid mixing freshly cut daffodils with other flowers in arrangements because they produce a chemical that injures blooms. Place daffodils in another container for a day after cutting, then rinse the stems before arranging.

Spring bulbs should be fertilized as flowers fade. Remove foliage only after it begins to fade.

Fertilize spring bulbs with a 10-10-10 fertilizer (one pound of fertilizer per 100 square feet of flowerbed).

To help control weeds in your garden, apply a two to three-inch layer of mulch.

Sprinkle crushed eggshells around plants susceptible to slugs and snails, especially hostas.

Be on the lookout for summer bulbs at your favorite garden center. For better selection, buy them when they become available but do not plant them until late April or early May.

Plant clematis and other vines and put out hummingbird feeders.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested. Your County Extension Agent has soil test bags and instructions.

If your soil test indicates that you need to add lime, it needs to be added two to three months prior to planting your garden.

Houseplants - Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength.

If you want flowers on your cactus, plant it in a small pot. Most cactuses bloom sooner if rootbound.

Miscellaneous - Set your lawnmower blade on its highest setting and cut back liriopé before new growth begins, being careful not to damage the crown of the plant.

Sharpen or replace lawn mower blades if you have not already done so.

Lift steppingstones that have sunk below grass level, spread sand in the low area and replace the steppingstone.

Clean leaves and other debris from ponds and water features.

April:

Trees and Shrubs – You may kill pollinating bees if you spray your fruit trees with pesticides while they are blooming. Wait until most of the blooms have dropped before spraying.

When planting a new tree, keep weeds and grasses out of a 3 foot by 3-foot area around the tree to reduce competition for nutrients and moisture. Cover the ground around the tree with mulch.

Don't be too quick to remove perennials and shrubs that have been damaged by cold. Cut back the dead branches above ground but leave the roots in place until June to see if new shoots appear.

Fertilize fruit trees just before or during bloom period, always following label directions.

Fertilize azaleas after blooming is complete.

Prune spring-flowering trees and shrubs AFTER they bloom.

Protect hydrangeas and roses if a late frost threatens.

Twist off faded flowers of rhododendron after they bloom to double the number of flowers next year.

Buy azaleas when in bloom so you can select colors compatible with your existing landscape.

As you see new growth on your roses, begin fertilizing (following label directions) every four to six weeks.

Container grown trees can be planted now.

Remove the thin sprouts (suckers) that grow from the base of Dogwood, Cherry and Crabapple trees and Crape Myrtles.

Regularly water bare-root roses and trees planted this spring.

Vegetables - Plant tomato seedlings in your garden as the weather warms up, after the danger of frost has passed. To reduce the likelihood of blossom end rot on your tomatoes, work one-half handful of dolomitic lime into the soil around each plant, mulch and provide a uniform amount of moisture during the growing season.

Leaf lettuce can be grown in containers or in your vegetable garden from spring until summer. Choose a site with four to six hours of direct sunlight and expect to harvest in about 45 days.

Do not work in your garden when the foliage is wet to avoid spreading diseases from one plant to another.

Don't rush to plant corn. Wait until the soil has warmed up, or the seeds may rot.

Set out herb transplants after the danger of frost has passed.

Flowerbeds - Eliminate weeds before they set seed, and you will also be reducing future weed problems.

Fertilize emerging perennials with bonemeal, following label directions.

Fertilize daylilies in April, June and September.

Fertilize summer bulbs now. Always follow label directions.

After spring-flowering bulbs are finished blooming, feed them a 5-10-15 or similar ratio fertilizer following label directions.

Remove faded flowers from daffodils and hyacinths but let the foliage remain and die back naturally.

Divide and transplant perennials and ground cover this month. Water them well until they are established if rain is sparse.

As the soil temperature warms up, begin planting summer flowering bulbs – dahlias, gladiolus, caladiums, cannas.

Mid-to-late April is a good time to plant annuals and perennials. Fertilize with a starter fertilizer that contains lots of phosphorus (the middle fertilizer number).

Dig in 2 cubic feet of soil conditioner for every 10 square feet of bed area when preparing new flower beds.

Replace the pansies in container planters with summer annuals.

For a different look on a sunny fence, trellis or mailbox, plant hyacinth bean – a fast-growing ornamental bean (annual). Pink flowers give way to shiny, purple pods that are as attractive as the flowers. Wait until after the danger of frost to plant.

Pull up invasive plants such as Chinese privet, honeysuckle and English ivy.

Houseplants - Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength. Protect them from the direct sun.

Compost - If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Miscellaneous - Fertilize cool and warm season grasses.

Sod or sprig new lawn areas to fill in bare spots in existing lawns.

May:

Trees and Shrubs - Do not pile mulch against the trunks of trees. This can encourage possible insect and water problems. Mulch should be approximately 6 to 8 inches away on all sides.

Lichens growing on your tree trunk may be an indication that your tree is stressed from soil compaction, poor drainage or insufficient fertilizer.

Water roses with a soaker hose to keep water off the foliage and possibly prevent blackspot.

Fertilize azaleas, rhododendrons, and roses now, following label directions.

Mulch newly planted blueberry plants to insulate shallow roots from heat and drought.

Prune climbing roses after they finish flowering.

Prune off sprouts from the base of crape myrtles that are being trained to an upright tree form.

Wait until after your azaleas have bloomed to prune them (if pruning is needed). This is also an ideal time to fertilize them.

Remove faded blooms from rhododendrons to increase the buds that make the blooms for next year.

Remove low-hanging and dead limbs from shade trees.

It is still not too late to set out roses.

Vegetables - Plant rosemary, basil, thyme and other herbs to enhance summer meals. Herbs are a good choice for a flowerbox for your patio. Most herbs grow best in full sun, but mint, cilantro, parsley and thyme tolerate moderate shade.

Tomatoes can be grown in containers on a sunny deck or patio. Bush-type tomatoes do better in containers; plant in a large pot at least 24 inches across filled with good quality planting soil. Fertilize and water tomatoes regularly.

Plant peppers by the first part of June for summer harvest.

Strong sun and wind are hard on new transplants. Set them out in the late afternoon so the plants have overnight to acclimatize.

Fertilize your vegetable garden every four to six weeks during the summer, always following label directions.

Flowerbeds - Seeds of annual flowers like zinnias, cosmos, salvia, marigolds, and nasturtiums can be seeded directly into prepared flowerbeds.

Replace pansies with summer annuals and plant ornamental grasses now.

As your spring flowering bulbs die back, plant bulb beds with annuals for summer color, being careful not to disturb your bulbs.

Remove invasive plants like Chinese privet, poison ivy and English ivy from your landscape.

Do not remove daffodil foliage after they have bloomed until it turns yellow. The leaves absorb sunshine for energy and nutrition for the bulbs so they can bloom again next year.

Look for Lenten rose seedlings underneath your mature plants and transplant them to other shady spots in your garden.

Pinch out terminal growth (the tip) of annuals to make bushy plants and encourage growth.

Use rubber soaker hoses among shrubs and flowers in beds and mulch with pine straw to put the water where the plants need it and to conserve water this summer.

Fertilize flowerbeds with a slow-release fertilizer.

Move or replant irises if they did not bloom very well last season.

Variegated hosta may turn green when grown in lots of sun. It's best to grow hosta where it does not get hot afternoon sun.

Plant annual vines like moon flower vine and purple hyacinth bean to disguise ugly walls and enliven fences.

Plant sunflowers for a sunny summer flower arrangement.

Weed flowerbeds and borders regularly.

Caladiums need generous amounts of water and fertilizer to continually produce new leaves during the summer.

Houseplants - Rejuvenate houseplants by lightly pruning them and moving them outdoors to a partly sunny/partly shady area for the summer. Start fertilizing at half the recommended strength.

Miscellaneous - Look for fire ant mounds and treat with appropriate insecticides, always following label directions.

June:

Trees and Shrubs - Cuttings of deciduous shrubs may be rooted in late June; root 6-inch clippings in damp sand, keeping it moist and roots may form by September.

One of the best things you can do for your trees and shrubs is to eliminate nutrient and water competition by removing the grass and weeds growing at the base of your plant and add about two inches of mulch.

Remove small sprouts from the base and from the trunk of tree-form crape myrtles.

Prune azaleas (if needed) after they have finished blooming and make sure they have about 2 inches of mulch.

Prune climbing roses after blooming finishes, cutting away weak, old or woody canes.

Prune hydrangeas (if needed) when most of the flowers have faded.

Vegetables - Don't kill the big green caterpillars that get on your parsley or fennel. They will soon become beautiful swallowtail butterflies.

If you like the taste of homegrown tomatoes but do not have garden space, patio type tomatoes can be grown on a sunny porch (6 hours minimum sun) in a 24-inch pot or larger.

Fertilize tomato plants regularly, inspect them for signs of leaf diseases and spray with fungicide if necessary. Always follow label directions.

Harvest vegetables regularly to prolong production and enjoy your vegetables at the peak of their freshness. One ripe vegetable on your okra or squash plant halts blooming on the entire plant. Use a knife when harvesting so you will not damage your plant.

Watch for Japanese beetles in your garden. Hand-pick them or spray with an insect killer, always following label directions. Systemic products are also on the market, but they may kill beneficial insects as well as the Japanese beetles.

Plant corn in several short rows, side by side, instead of a long single row because wind currents pollinate it, not insects.

Plant herbs in sunny patio pots near your kitchen and you can start harvesting leaves in a few weeks. Your plants will grow best if you harvest regularly.

Container grown vegetables and flowers can dry out quickly on a patio in full sun. Daily watering may be necessary.

Be careful if you must work in your garden when the soil is too wet. When planting, the wet soil will clump together and possibly leave air pockets that will dry out your plant's roots. Water in new plantings well.

Mulch your vegetable garden with pine straw or wheat straw. You can use three sheets of newspaper to cover the ground around your plants, then cover the paper with straw.

Water cucumbers regularly so they won't have a bitter taste.

Check garden crops daily for disease and insect problems.

Harvest onions, garlic and Irish potatoes when two thirds of the plant tops have died down.

Pull weeds from vegetable gardens and flowerbeds weekly.

Flowerbeds - An easy formula for creating a beautiful container garden is to use a single tall plant with a trailer that spills over the edge, along with some plants to fill in the gaps.

Divide the iris after they bloom.

Use soaker hoses to irrigate annuals, perennials, shrubs and vegetables.

Remove faded flowers from summer annuals to prevent a lull in blooming.

Some quick growing annuals you can grow in your garden are cleome, cosmos, marigold and zinnia.

Look for seedlings under your Lenten roses and transplant them to other shady spots in your garden or share them with a friend.

Check dahlias for spider mites and spray with an insecticide, if necessary, always following label directions. Clip the faded flowers to encourage blooms through the summer.

Stake tall growing flowers like dahlias, lilies and hollyhocks.

Cut back chrysanthemums so they won't be too leggy later in the summer and fall when they bloom.

Continue planting annuals for summer color and fill in bare spots in your flower garden.

Summer blooming bulbs can still be planted.

Fertilize flowerbeds.

Houseplants - Houseplants that have been moved outdoors may require more water during summer months.

Divide overgrown Boston ferns.

Miscellaneous - During hot weather, raise the height of your mower to help your lawn withstand hot, dry weather.

Install a birdbath and enjoy the show.

July:

Trees and Shrubs - Water trees to keep them alive during the dry summer months. Water the ground at the base of the trunk and out as far as the limb canopy reaches.

Trees and shrubs may need to be lightly trimmed in the summer months to maintain a desired shape but save all major pruning jobs for the late winter.

Avoid wetting the foliage of roses when watering them as this encourages leaf disease.

For better health of your creeping juniper, prune out old, dead foliage underneath the plants.

Vegetables - If you have not planted your tomatoes, corn, beans and okra, do so by mid July to allow time for them to mature before cool weather.

Water early in the day or late in the evening for the best results. Much of the water will evaporate if you water in the middle of the day. For more efficient watering, water at the root zone with soaker hoses.

Cut back by half herbs like basil and oregano to promote leaves and to prevent them from producing seed.

Look for and remove hornworms (big green caterpillars camouflaged among the stems) on your tomato and pepper plants.

Mulch your garden to retain moisture, lower the temperature, reduce the number of weeds and prevent the soil surface from compacting.

Japanese beetles are hard to control. Hand pick if you can but you may need to apply an insecticide. Always follow label directions.

Remove vegetable plants from your garden once they have finished bearing to prevent disease/insect buildup.

Plant pumpkin seeds now for pumpkins in October.

Remove tomato suckers (a shoot growing between the main stem and a branch) and root them for new plants. Select 5 – 6" long suckers and root in water and then plant in your garden.

Pick squash, cucumbers and okra regularly to keep the plants producing.

A big rotten spot on the end of a ripe tomato means it has blossom end rot. Purchase a product from your garden center that specifically treats this and apply lime to your garden soil in the fall to decrease susceptibility next growing season.

Extreme heat can cause tomatoes and peppers to stop setting fruit. This is a temporary condition, and they will continue to set fruit once temperatures drop.

Dig Irish potatoes and harvest garlic when the leaves turn yellow and shrivel up.

Remove water-robbing weeds from your garden. One weed that goes to seed this year makes many weeds next year.

Flowerbeds - If your annuals and perennials need to be rejuvenated, cut one-third of the existing growth, water and fertilize. In about ten days, your annuals will bloom again with a fuller, healthier appearance and in September, your perennials will be more compact and less likely to topple over or split in high winds.

It is not too late to sow seeds of quick growing annuals such as marigolds and zinnias.

Cut back dahlias to half their height after they bloom for fall flowers.

Divide crowded bearded iris clumps making sure each root has a healthy fan of leaves.

In addition to summer annuals, coleus and caladium, two plants with beautiful foliage color, can be planted for long-lasting summer color.

Cut back tall overgrown chrysanthemums in early July for compact growth. Then allow the plant to grow for fall blooms.

Cut purple coneflower and black-eyed Susan for a nice bouquet. This will help the plants continue to bloom for a longer period and give you much pleasure.

Hanging baskets continually exposed to sun, wind and high temperatures may need to be watered every day.

Stake tall plants.

Remove faded flowers from annuals and perennials to encourage more blooms.

Houseplants - Remove standing water from flowerpot saucers and watering cans where mosquitoes can breed.

Treat mealy bugs on coleus and African violets with a cotton swab saturated with rubbing alcohol.

Miscellaneous - Fireflies are fun to watch and are beneficial. The larvae eat mites, snails, slugs and other soft-bodied insects.

To help keep your compost pile from drying out, make the top of your pile concave so rainfall is directed to the center.

Make sure your mower blades are sharp. A ragged cut causes grass to use more water.

Keep shovel blades sharp with a file or grinder. A sharp blade makes digging hard soil easier.

August:

Trees and Shrubs - Prune overgrown blueberries after harvest. Shorten tall central stems to encourage more horizontal branches.

Rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias prefer acidic soils. Discarded coffee grounds and tea leaves added to the soil around these plants can provide a natural means of maintaining soil acidity.

If trees and shrubs need pruning, only lightly prune them early this month so new growth will have time to mature before cold weather arrives.

Remove crape myrtle seedpods as soon as they form to encourage late summer bloom.

Fertilize roses with 10-10-10 fertilizer, 1 tablespoon per foot of height.

Cut faded blooms from your roses so your plant's energy will be directed to producing new flowers instead of seeds.

Vegetables - Summer heat may cause some of the blooms on your vegetable plants to drop. The plants will hold blooms again once the weather is cooler. To reduce some of the effects of the heat, apply a three-inch layer of mulch around the plants and water regularly.

Cucumbers and squash can still be planted. It is too late for corn, lima beans, okra, pole beans, and tomatoes this season because they will not have enough time to mature before cold weather.

Plant garlic in August for harvest early next summer.

Test your soil now and you will have time to improve it, if necessary, before next spring's planting season. Your County Extension Agent has soil testing instructions.

Plan your fall vegetable garden now: collards, kale, mustard, spinach, beets, onions, turnips, broccoli, and radishes. Plant mid-to-late August.

Water plants several hours before applying insecticides so the insecticide will not burn them. When applying insecticides, always follow label directions.

To prevent insect and disease problems in your vegetable garden, remove plants when they have finished bearing.

Harvest squash, okra, and cucumbers regularly so your plants will continue producing. Use a sharp knife with a narrow blade to avoid damaging the plant. Remove weeds before they make seeds.

Begin propagating outdoor herb plantings for an indoor winter herb garden.

Flowerbeds - Cut back annuals, such as begonias, petunias, impatiens, and geraniums when they get "leggy". Water them well and lightly fertilize. This will encourage compact growth and more blooms in about three weeks.

If your clematis vine has turned completely brown, do not dig it up. Prune out dead stems and leave them alone and it may sprout new growth next spring.

If your older peony plants had diminished flowers this past spring, dig, separate, and replant them.

Brighten up your hanging baskets by clipping out dead leaves and flowers and fertilizing with a slow-release fertilizer. Water regularly and replace any plants that have died with new plants.

Begin planting fall blooming bulbs.

Remove faded bedding plants from your garden and re-seed with marigolds, cosmos and zinnias to provide color during the fall months.

Fertilize chrysanthemums and fall blooming asters regularly until the buds show color.

Divide and transplant daylilies, Shasta daisies and iris.

Collect Hosta and blackberry lily seeds to save for planting next spring.

Patio plants and window boxes dry out quickly. Check their watering needs daily.

Root 4" cutting of coleus in water. After roots have formed, plant them in a pot and enjoy them indoors for the winter.

Gather wildflowers for drying.

Fertilize annual bedding plants that are in bloom; follow label directions.

Miscellaneous - Place a garden bench in a corner of your garden so you can sit and enjoy the summer evening sounds.

Be on the lookout for poison ivy along the ground and climbing up trees. To control it, spray with a non-selective weed killer, always following label directions.

September:

Trees and Shrubs - Gardening lore says plant trees, shrubs, and perennials in months which have the letter "r" in their names – September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April.

Fertilize roses one last time for the season so they will have time to slow down their growth before cold weather arrives.

Azaleas and rhododendrons are forming flower buds now for next year so keep these plants watered to insure good bud formation and flowers next spring.

Mulch trees and shrubs to protect your plants from temperature extremes and to keep the soil evenly moist. Keep mulch back 3 inches from the trunk to prevent damage and disease.

Do not prune or fertilize trees and shrubs now. Pruning and fertilizing will stimulate new growth that could be hurt as temperatures drop.

Replace mulch under trees and shrubs to prevent diseases on next year's foliage.

Vegetables - Plant a fall garden: sow seeds/transplant seedlings of mustard, spinach, turnips, beets, carrots, kale, radishes, broccoli, lettuce, onions, collards, and cabbage.

Plant garlic now for harvest next summer.

Cover crops like annual rye, buckwheat and crimson clover planted in unused areas of your garden help hold the soil in place and add organic matter when tilled into the soil next spring before planting.

Clean up your vegetable garden space to decrease your pest problems next season.

Dig sweet potatoes before frost.

To keep weed seeds from blowing into your cultivated garden area, keep turf surrounding your garden mowed, directing grass clippings away from your garden area.

Do not apply pesticides when temperatures exceed 85 degrees or when it is windy.

Flowerbeds - Autumn is a good time to add perennials, trees and shrubs to your garden. Plant fall blooming perennials such as aster, chrysanthemum, goldenrod and black-eyed Susan for fall color.

Perennials perform better in soil that drains well. When digging beds this fall, add compost and soil conditioners to help with drainage.

For good selections, purchase daffodil, tulip, hyacinth and other spring blooming bulbs as they arrive at your nursery. Store in a cool area and plant in October when soil temperatures are in the 60's or cooler.

Fertilize chrysanthemums now for lots of blooms this fall.

Divide overcrowded groundcovers like ajuga and liriope and overgrown clumps of daylily, iris and coneflower this month.

Not all spring flowering bulbs bloom at the same time; check varieties and bloom times. For early color, "Early Sensation" is a daffodil variety that blooms in January in our area.

Fertilize bulbs when you plant them because it is hard to locate them until they come up next spring.

Edge and weed existing perennial beds. Use a granular weed-preventer (following label directions) to reduce winter weeds and apply mulch.

Plant your pansies and violas as the weather cools.

Remove faded blooms from pansies to keep them blooming and healthy.

Lawns - Fertilize fescue lawns following label instructions.

Rake up fallen leaves and add them to your compost pile to create a rich soil amendment. If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Soil Test - Have your soil tested. Stop by your local Extension Office for a soil testing bag and instructions.

Houseplants - Lightly trim and check your houseplants that have spent the summer on your patio for insects and disease and if necessary, treat them (following label directions) before moving them inside for the winter.

Take cuttings of coleus and geraniums to grow inside until next spring.

Root leaves of African violet plants to give as Christmas gifts.

Miscellaneous - Begin collecting dried materials for fall and winter arrangements and decorations.

October:

Trees and Shrubs - Plant trees and shrubs now. Their roots will have time to become well established before the demands of spring growth. Remove any twine or wire that is wrapped around the trunk when you plant.

Lightly fertilize evergreen azaleas and rhododendron to prevent yellowing during winter.

Refurbish mulch around shrubs and trees but do not place mulch too close to the plant's trunk. Mulch helps control weeds, provides insulation for the roots during cold weather, and helps keep the soil moist.

Do not heavily prune shrubs or trees now, as this will force new growth that will be susceptible to cold weather injury.

Keep evergreen shrubs and small trees watered to help prevent damage from low temperatures.

Fruit Trees - Pick up fallen apples, peaches, pears and plums from under your trees and destroy them to avoid diseases next spring.

Vegetables - Clean up old plant debris from this year's vegetable garden because insects and diseases can survive winter weather in this material. Before storing your tomato cages, remove old tomato vines from them.

Add spent plants from your vegetable and flower gardens and leaves to your compost pile. Do not put diseased plant material in your compost pile or you may spread disease to other plants when you use your compost. If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Spread shredded leaves and manure over your vegetable garden soil and turn it under to improve soil fertility, structure, and water-holding capacity.

Harvest your pumpkins as the vines begin to dry.

Protect strawberries with a light layer of pine straw mulch.

Dig sweet potatoes as the vines die back. Let them 'cure' in a dry, warm spot before storing.

If you have not already planted garlic, plant now for harvest next summer. Break garlic bulbs into individual cloves for planting, 3 inches deep and 4-6 inches apart.

Harvest mature green tomatoes before the first frost.

Before the first frost, cut and preserve herbs.

Water your soil before harvesting your carrots so they will be easier to pull. Once harvested, trim the tops so the leaves will not draw moisture out of the carrots, making them limp.

Flowerbeds - Fall is a very good time to plant perennials like coneflower and black-eyed Susan and divide existing perennials.

Divide perennials like daylilies, phlox, and iris.

Collect seeds from perennials and annuals. Clean them and store them in a cool dry place. Plant them next spring.

As the weather turns cool, plant spring flowering bulbs like tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, and crocus. A general rule is to set bulbs three times as deep as the dimension of the bulb.

Fertilize freshly planted pansies with a water-soluble fertilizer. Switch to a nitrate nitrogen fertilizer as the weather gets cooler.

Cut chrysanthemums and asters back to about five inches tall after they have bloomed so they will sprout strongly in spring.

Top-dress your perennial beds with one or two inches of compost, keeping it away from the crown of your plants.

Fertilize established bulb beds with one-half cup per ten square feet of bulb fertilizer, always following package directions.

Plant peonies now. Buds should be no more than two inches below the soil surface.

Continue planting pansies and other cool season annuals like snapdragons and ornamental kale.

After the foliage dies back, dig caladium bulbs and store them loosely in dry peat moss or vermiculite for the winter.

If you have not already done so, dig dahlia tubers and elephant's-ear for winter storage. Dry them under shelter for about a week then store them loosely in dry peat moss.

Lawns - Rake fallen leaves from your lawn to keep them from matting down and killing your grass. Add them to your compost pile.

Replace areas of the lawn that are thin because of too much shade with a groundcover like liriopse or ajuga.

Soil Test - If your soil test indicates that your soil needs lime, now is the time to add it to your soil in the recommended amounts.

Houseplants - As night temperatures approach the mid-50s, bring in houseplants that have spent the warm weather on your deck or patio. Check for insect infestation.

Divide overgrown Boston ferns and re-pot.

Miscellaneous - Carve a pumpkin.

November:

Trees and Shrubs - Fall is an excellent time to plant trees, shrubs, and perennials. Be sure to remove any wire that may be wrapped around the trunk and roots when you plant a tree.

Do not prune trees and shrubs now because the pruning will stimulate new growth that may be killed by freezes. Wait until January or February when they are dormant.

Add a fresh layer of mulch to trees and shrubs to help insulate the roots as temperatures drop. There are two choices: shredded leaves and pine straw.

Deciduous trees and shrubs can help with energy efficiency in your home. They provide shade in the summer and let sunshine in during the winter.

To help prevent damage to evergreen shrubs and small trees from low temperatures, make sure they receive adequate moisture as we enter the winter season.

Scale insects on trees and shrubs can be controlled with dormant oils.

Fruit Trees - Set out fruiting plants from October to March.

Vegetables - Make a list of vegetable and plant varieties that performed well in your garden this season so you will be ready to order seeds for your spring plantings.

Consider planting unused areas of your vegetable garden with a cover crop like clover or put a layer of leaves on your garden. Plow it under about three weeks before spring planting and this will improve your soil by adding nutrients and organic matter.

To prepare your garden soil for planting next spring, turn your soil 8 to 12 inches deep with a spade or shovel to provide aeration and add composted organic matter.

Clean your tomato cages before storing them to prevent insects and diseases when you plant next spring.

Flowerbeds - Clean up your perennial borders by removing dry stems and dead leaves to help prevent a build-up of insects and diseases and add composted organic matter.

Dig up bulbs that need to be stored for the winter like caladiums, elephant's ears and dahlias.

Plant spring flowering bulbs now, and through the end of November.

There is still time to plant pansies. Fertilize them every two weeks with water-soluble plant food and to encourage more bloom, remove faded flowers regularly. Switch to a fertilizer containing "nitrate nitrogen" and follow label directions as the weather gets colder.

Plant Lenten rose (*Helleborus orientalis*) now, and it may bloom for you next February.

After your chrysanthemums and asters have quit blooming, cut them back to about five inches.

Remove any remaining foliage left on peonies.

Pot up your Mandevilla vine and bring it indoors for the winter. Cut it back to 2 feet high and place it in bright light until spring.

Keep pansies and other seasonal flowers watered regularly.

Lawns - To keep your lawn healthy, rake fallen leaves regularly from your lawn. Use fallen leaves in your compost pile or shred them and use them for mulch.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested if you have not already done so. Stop by your local Extension office for a soil test bag and instructions. If you need to add lime, add it now so it will have time to work into the soil. Wait until next spring to apply any fertilizer that is needed so the nutrients will not leach from the soil before spring planting.

Houseplants - Do not be alarmed if your houseplants drop a few leaves when you bring them indoors after they have enjoyed the summer on your patio. This is normal as they adjust to less light and drier air inside your home.

Force bulbs to bloom indoors; a good choice is paperwhites.

Cut back on fertilizing your indoor plants and do not water them unless the soil feels dry.

Do not place your houseplants too close to a window because the draft can turn the leaves brown.

Miscellaneous - Collect okra seedpods, rose hips, gourds, and other material from your garden for dried flower arrangements and craft projects.

Inventory and clean up your garden tools. If you need a tool, you may drop a hint to friends and family since the Christmas season is coming soon!

Add a rain barrel to your gutter down spout to conserve rainwater for your garden.

If you do not have a compost pile, it's not too late to start one.

Keep your bird feeders filled with black oil sunflower seeds.

Leave hardy water lilies and fish in ponds deep enough not to freeze solid. Compost tropical water lilies.

December

Trees and Shrubs - Trees, shrubs, and perennials can still be planted or transplanted to a new location this month if the ground is not too frozen to work properly. Some trees and shrubs that will provide food for birds are dogwood, crabapple, holly, hawthorn, and pyracantha.

Continue raking leaves from your lawn and apply lime if your soil test indicates that it is needed. A hand-held shredder that acts like a vacuum is an alternative to raking. The shredded, bagged leaves can then be deposited in your garden.

If you have not already done so, mulch all trees, shrubs, perennials, and bulbs. A four to six-inch layer of mulch is good, placing the mulch close but not touching the stem or trunk of the plant.

Deciduous trees and shrubs can be pruned as needed when they are fully dormant.

Rake and dispose of fruit and leaves around fruit trees to help minimize over-wintering insects and diseases.

If rain and snowfall are inadequate, water all new plantings and bulb beds.

Flower Beds - Cut chrysanthemums back to about two to three inches once blooming is complete.

To keep your pansies healthy and blooming, deadhead (remove faded blooms) and fertilize, following label directions.

Spring flowering bulbs can still be planted this month.

Clean up flowerbeds and remove annuals killed by frost. Work old mulch and organic matter into beds before the soil freezes.

Apply pre-emergent herbicides to control winter weeds.

Vegetables - Plan ahead. Order gardening catalogs and start planning your spring vegetable and flower gardens.

Prepare next year's garden soil by turning it over and incorporating organic materials such as pine bark, compost, or shredded leaves.

Pull any weeds that remain in your garden.

Cut any remaining tops off of asparagus plants and add a winter dressing of aged manure to the bed.

Houseplants - Do not over water houseplants during the winter months as this could lead to root rot.

Miscellaneous - As winter approaches, take time to review your past gardening year. Look at your successes and failures and make your next year's plans and goals accordingly.

If you decorate for the holidays with a cut Christmas tree, recycle the tree by pruning off boughs for use as frost and wind protection for tender and newly planted perennials and shrubs.

Prepare your garden tools for winter storage. Clean, sharpen, and store them in a bucket filled with oiled, coarse sand. They will be ready for you when spring arrives.

If you have not already done so, shut down outdoor irrigation systems to prevent freezing and drain garden hoses and store indoors.

Don't forget to feed the birds because as winter approaches, they may not be able to find an adequate supply of food. Keep fresh water out for the birds as well.

Lightly trim evergreens in your garden to use for holiday decorations. Magnolia, euonymus, boxwood, laurel, holly, cypress, and juniper all make long-lasting cut stems indoors.

Look for after Christmas sales on garden tools and equipment.

Make a wreath of dried herbs and flowers from your garden.

If you do not have a garden journal, get one and start keeping records of your garden. Record information such as future plans for design, plant and seed orders, planting schedules, insect appearances, garden highlights (like the date when you first see blooms on your spring bulbs), and more.

Celebrate the winter solstice (the arrival of winter) December 21st.

Jo Anne Allen

Master Gardener Extension Volunteer