



Winter Garden Tips

It's the most wonderful time of the year! The Christmas season is upon us! I am also reminded that the end of the year is rapidly approaching. During this time of year there are still a few things that you can do in your landscape.

Shrubs and trees

You can plant trees and shrubs in your landscape as long as the ground is not frozen. Be sure to mulch transplants and keep them watered to ensure adequate root growth.

The best time to prune trees and shrubs is in late winter and early spring, while plants are dormant and before buds start to swell. As a general rule, plants that flower after July 1st should be pruned in late winter or early spring before growth starts. These will include crape myrtle, rose-of-sharon, butterfly bushes, roses and some hydrangeas.

You can prune evergreen branches to use in holiday decorating. Branches of beautyberry and winterberry holly are used for their colorful berries during the holiday season.

Perennials and bulbs

Be sure to remove excess layers of leaves that may mat down and smother perennials as they promote rotting.

Remove the soil from your containers. The soil from your containers makes an excellent amendment to your garden beds or compost pile. Be sure to clean out and sterilize those pots and store them for next year's plantings.

You can plant paperwhite narcissus bulbs in a shallow container of soil or gravel. They will bloom indoors during the winter months. The only thing that they will need is a steady supply of moisture.

Lawn Care

If you have finished mowing for the year, make sure that your mower is stored properly. Run the engine until the gas tank is empty. Old gas can severely damage the engine.

Be sure to get your lawnmower ready for the spring by getting the blade sharpened.

Chores and maintenance

Keep your bird feeders full. Providing a steady food supply will ensure you will have visitors during the winter months.

Drain your hoses and put them away. Water expands as it freezes and can burst pipes and hoses.

In addition to cleaning your garden tools, you should oil any moving parts on tools such as pruners and garden loppers. Be sure to lubricate the wooden handles on your shovels and other tools.

This is also a good month to replace tools. They are much more affordable this time of year.

You should also start thinking about landscape improvements for next season. Many people will be going through their garden catalogs to get an idea of what they would like to purchase for next spring. Take pictures of your gardens during the past growing season and see where you can make improvements.

December is an excellent time to prepare your garden for springtime. By the way, don't forget the gardener on your gift list. A gift certificate to a nursery, garden center or gardening magazines will surely make your gardener happy! Until next time, have a wonderful holiday season!



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