

Gardening Activities for January

Lawn

For easier lawn maintenance, plan to get rid of hard-to-mow spaces by planting trees, ground covers, shrubs etc.

Shrubs

Water outside containers planted with evergreens. Apply miscible oil sprays to kill overwintering mites, aphids, and scale on shrubs.

Prune in January/February or in November/December summer blooming hydrangea, abelia, arborvitae, beautyberry, boxwood, butterflybush, chastetree, cherrylaurel, clethra, deciduous and evergreen cotoneaster, thorny eleagnus, deciduous and evergreen euonymus, gardenia, hibiscus, deciduous holly, juniper, osmanthus holly, photinia, deciduous and evergreen privet, potentilla, Rose of Sharon, yew, and althea. Prune chasetree, nandina, summer-blooming spirea, and St. Johnswort only in January/February.

Protect borderline hardy plants—aucuba, camellia, and gardenia—by mounding soil or compost over the crown after the ground surface freezes and by using windbreaks.

Trees

Apply miscible oil sprays to kill overwintering mites, aphids, and scale on deciduous trees.

Prune in January/February and November/December: redbud, dogwood, smoke tree, sumac, and any summer flowering trees that bloom on new wood: Prune January-March: crape myrtle and any summer flowering trees that bloom on new wood. Prune in January or December: mugo pine.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Sour cherry is a good fruit for the home garden. 'Montmorency' is a recommended variety as it pollinates itself and can be planted alone.

Herbs

Start thyme indoors from seed.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Check to see if any perennials have been heaved by freezing and thawing of soil. Firmly press down any that have lifted and cover with 2 inches of organic mulch.

Mulch chrysanthemums with left-over Christmas tree branches.

To prolong bloom of poinsettias, protect from drafts and keep slightly moist.

Plant seeds of fibrous rooted begonia, alyssum, coleus, dusty miller, impatiens, marigolds, petunias, phlox, portulaca, salvia, vinca, gerbera, ageratum, baby's breath, statice, pansy, sweet pea, snapdragon, verbena, geranium, and petunia indoors now or in February for transplanting outdoors in spring.

Vegetables

Plant seeds of celery, celeriac, sweet Spanish onion, parsley, and anise indoors now for transplanting outdoors later in the spring.

Ground Covers and Vines

Cut and remove vines—bittersweet, wisteria, wild grape, poison ivy, Virginia creeper, and Japanese honeysuckle--that are strangling trees.

Houseplants

Turn and prune houseplants regularly to keep them shapely. To promote bushy plants, pinch back new growth.

Water houseplants only when the soil is dry to the touch.

Cut off the stalks of amaryllis close to the base once the bulb is no longer blooming. Keep bulb in pot and continue to water and fertilize. New foliage will grow.

Sterilize all tools, pots, and anything you use around your plants with one part household bleach to nine parts water. Soak about 15 minutes, rinse and air dry.

Gardening Activities for February

Lawns and Landscaping

Apply pre-emergence herbicide and crabgrass killer to tall fescue lawns before forsythia blooms fade—mid February to mid March.

Apply new grass seed during this period if do not use pre-emergence material which hinders germination of grass seed.

Apply crabgrass killer and pre-emergence herbicide to Bermuda/Zoysia grasses mid January-March 1.

Shrubs

Force branches of winter honeysuckle, viburnum, pussy willow, spirea, Japanese and mountain andromeda, rhododendron, and forsythia to bloom indoors for winter flower arrangements.

Prune roses in late February before buds start to swell, leaving 3-5 strong canes, each about 12-18 inches tall. Plant miniature roses now.

Check shrubs to see if freezing-then-thawing soil has pushed roots out of the soil. If so, place roots back in soil and mulch.

Prune pittosporum February-May. Refer to January for other shrubs to prune during this month.

Force branches of spicebrush, serviceberry, azalea, and mountain laurel to bloom indoors for winter flower arrangements.

Trees

Force branches of dogwood, red bud, quince, red maple, buckeye, birch, hickory, larch, and oak to bloom indoors for winter flower arrangements.

Prune deciduous trees to remove dead, dying, unsightly parts of the tree, sprouts growing at or near the base of the tree trunk, crossed branches, and V-shaped crotches.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Plant fruit trees while dormant and prune established ones before bloom.

Prune berry bushes now if not done in late fall.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Cut back liriopse close to ground level.

Cut back any dormant perennials, such as sedum 'Autumn Joy,' that have not been cleaned up yet.

Start indoors from seed gazania, geranium, alyssum, coleus, dusty miller, impatiens, marigold, phlox, portulaca, salvia, vinca, verbena, ageratum, begonia, and petunia if have not already done so.

Plant sweet peas and calendula now as they do not like heat.

Clean up and burn or destroy all debris around daylilies and iris. Divide daylilies if needed.

Pull back mulch around bulbs as foliage pokes through soil.

Feed iris 10-10-10 when crocus in bloom.

Vegetables

Plant spinach, early peas, onion sets, asparagus, radishes in late February and early March.

Destroy verticillium wilt fungus in garden soil by mixing broccoli pieces into your soil, watering and covering with plastic. Decaying broccoli produces a toxic gas that destroys the fungus.

Ground Covers and Vines

Prune vines--Clematis jackmanii, trumpet vine, etc., that bloom on new wood to lowest pair of strong buds.

Houseplants

Throw out Christmas poinsettias—and don't feel guilty.

Water gardenia, citrus and other acid-loving plants once a month using a solution of 1 teaspoon of vinegar to 1 quart of water.

Resume fertilizer schedules for houseplants; water all plants before.

Air layer dracaena, dieffenbachia, fatsia, and rubber plant in late February if they have grown too tall and leggy.

Wash leaves of philodendron, dracaena, rubber plant and other plants with large leaves and smooth foliage to keep leaf pores open.

Control pest problems organically. Put 20-25 drops essential oil of pine in a 32-oz. spray bottle. Spray plant, wipe bugs off, and spray again.

Clean plants using 2 tablespoons of baby shampoo to one gallon of water. Place in a spray bottle, spray leaves and wipe with soft cloth.

Gardening Activities for March

Lawns, Grasses, and Landscaping

Remove thatch and aerate lawn.

Apply pre-emergence herbicide and crabgrass killer to tall fescue lawns mid-March when forsythia drops its flowers.

Overseed during this period only if also not using pre-emergence material which hinders germination of grass seed.

Apply crabgrass killer and pre-emergence herbicide to Bermuda/Zoysia grasses to prevent weeds from mid January through March 1.

Apply pre-emergent weed control and add compost to ornamental beds.

Shrubs

Discard florist potted azaleas after blooming as most are not hardy enough to be established outdoors.

Pinch back new growth now on pyracanthas to make more compact.

Prune spring-flowering shrubs after flowering is complete.

Plant roses and bare-root shrubs while dormant, about mid March.

Prune hedges leaving the base of the plant wider than the top to allow sunlight to get to the bottom of the plant.

Move boxwoods now.

Spray horticultural dormant oil on shrubs and trees to smother fungal diseases and insect eggs such as scale.

Prune camellia (Sasanqua) and other shrubs not previously pruned in January/February.

Trees

Prune trees that bleed--River Birch and Maple--only after their leaves are fully developed.

Move dogwoods now.

Prune, if have not already, crape myrtle and dogwood.

Herbs

Plant garlic around roses to reduce aphids and other pests.

Ground Covers and Vines

Prune wisteria now.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Let the weeding begin!

Apply pre-emergent weed control and add compost to ornamental beds.

Divide and transplant summer and fall-blooming perennials--ajuga, astilbe, aster, bleeding heart, coral bells, daylilies, lirioppe, oxalis, phlox, chrysanthemums, and Shasta daisies.

Fertilize perennial beds with a timed-release, 10-10-10 or 8-8-8-, food.

Remove excess mulch from around perennials and bulbs.

Plant seeds of many perennials and annuals indoors in early March for transplanting outdoors after the last frost in mid April. Grow under grow lights or on sunny window ledge.

Cut back to almost ground level and divide ornamental grasses such as pampas grass and fountain grass.

Share with friends. Cut back shoreline plants to enjoy view in summer.

Plant pansies by mid March for bright shows.

Sow seeds of alyssum, California poppy, candytuft, larkspur, pansy, viola, phlox, pinks, Shirley poppy, snapdragon, stock and sweet pea as soon as the soil has thawed.

Fertilize spring flowering bulbs as leaves emerge.

Vegetables

Plant tomato and pepper seeds inside in early March for transplanting outside after last frost in mid April.

Grow under grow lights or on sunny window ledge.

Plant spinach, onions, radishes, broccoli, collards, cabbage, Brussels spouts, potatoes, carrots, Swiss chard, and peas now.

Purchase seeds for warm-weather plants, flowering vines, perennials, and vegetables.

Houseplants

Start fertilizing now for good growth.

Repot plants that are rootbound and cut back leggy plants to encourage compact growth

Water plants more frequently.

Gardening Activities for April

Lawns and Landscaping

Don't fertilize tall fescue lawns but apply annual weed control.

Plant grass seed in bare spots in lawn.

Fertilize Bermuda/Zoysia grasses this month, again in May and again in June.

Mow lawn only after it has grown at least two inches.

Leave first grass clippings of the season on the ground as they are rich in nutrients and contain fewer weed seeds than those collected later.

Shrubs

Fertilize azaleas and camellias only after they have finished blooming.

Prune forsythia, camellia (Japanese and Sasanqua), daphne, winter jasmine, pittosporum, privet (deciduous and evergreen), serviceberry, pussy willow, witch hazel, and mugo pine. Those that flower should not be pruned until after flowering.

Plant container-grown roses.

Prune roses to buds that point outward to encourage air and sunlight penetration. Dark colored canes denote dead wood—remove.

Feed roses monthly April through October.

Trees

Prune quince now.

Transplant trees and shrubs before hot weather arrives.

Houseplants

Give Easter lilies bright, indirect light and moist soil.

After blooming, plant in a sunny spot in the garden after danger of frost is over and they will bloom next year. To avoid transmitting a virus, plant Easter lilies away from other lilies.

Wait until warm weather—55 degrees—is definitely here before moving houseplants outdoors.

Begin to feed houseplants lightly.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Harden off greenhouse plants before planting in the landscape.

Lift, divide, and replant chrysanthemums as soon as

new shoots appear. Pinch out the tops frequently until July 4th to thicken the plant. Share with friends.

Plant snapdragons, cosmos, larkspur, calendula, dusty miller, bells of Ireland, aster, candytuft, cleome, cornflower, dianthus, and phlox.

Pull mulch back from emerging plants.

Buy annuals that have lots of buds but aren't in bloom. These plants are not root bound and will establish and grow faster.

Plant strawflower, money plant, hydrangea, statice, Chinese lantern, celosia, and globe amaranth to dry for arrangements.

Fertilize bulbs upon emergence of foliage with a 10-10-10 fertilizer and after the bulbs have bloomed. Let foliage die naturally.

Plant dahlias in late April and stake at the time of planting.

Plant gladiolus, lilies, cannas and other summer-flowering bulbs intermittently now through mid June to extend blooming period.

Label daffodil clumps that are too crowded; dig up and separate in July.

Vegetables

Add compost, not manure, to garden soil to improve it. Also till into soil 10-10-10 fertilizer

Plant warm-season vegetables after April 21.

Herbs

Plant outside after April 21.

Plant oregano as a ground cover, parsley as an edging plant.

Ground Covers and Vines

Plant ground covers such as ajuga, small-leaved ivy, pachysandra, vinca minor, mondo grass, lirioppe and cast iron plant or ferns to cover barren spots under trees.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Plant strawberries now.

*Average last killing frost in spring is
April 4-April 21.*

Gardening Activities for May

Lawns and Landscaping

Lengthen the time between waterings and increase the amount of water provided at one time to encourage root growth.

Apply broad-leaf weed killer to control summer annual weeds on fescue lawns.

Do not fertilize fescue lawn unless it was not fertilized in the fall.

Overseed Bermuda grass before July 1. Prepare soil by thatching or raking.

Fertilize Bermuda grass and Zoysia this month and again in June.

Apply second application of pre-emergence for crabgrass if needed

Shrubs

Prune rhododendrons and azaleas immediately after flowering, now or in June.

Prune barberry, bayberry, camellias (all), daphne, fothergilla, Indian hawthorn, mugo pine, mahonia, photinia, pieris, spring-blooming spirea, viburnum (deciduous and evergreen), winter jasmine, flowering almond, weigela, and yew.

Mulch to conserve water during summer.

Trees

Remove suckers and watersprouts on trees such as crape myrtles.

Mulch to conserve water during summer.

Prune maple, deodar cedar, hemlock, spruce, pine, buckeye, red bud, crabapple, and Harry Lauder's walking stick.

Herbs

Plant dill, lavender, fennel, yarrow, tansy, and parsley to attract beneficial insects to garden.

Plant garlic around tomatoes to reduce aphids and other pests.

Ground Covers and Vines

Prune honeysuckle and wisteria.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Plant perennials such as columbine, cosmos, viburnum, and gaura.

Sidedress perennials and spring bulbs with 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer.

Dig and divide dusty miller and replant the more vigorous, outside portions of the clump. Fertilize well while growing.

Pinch back zinnias, petunias, and salvia when 4 to 6 inches high to promote bushy growth. Pinch chrysanthemums until July 4.

Set out marigolds, petunias, ageratum, impatiens, salvia, vinca, and fibrous begonias and other annuals.

Plant Easter lilies outdoors, and they may flower again in late August.

Vegetables

Harvest peas, radishes, lettuce, and spring onions among other cool-weather vegetables.

Plant warm-weather veggies such as snap beans, okra, squash, sweet corn, lima beans, eggplant, peppers, sweet potato, cucumber, melon, tomatoes, etc.—either from seeds or transplants.

Houseplants

Divide indoor plants when new growth starts in spring and root cuttings during spring and summer when the plant is actively growing.

Move houseplants outdoors when night temperatures stay above 55° F. Progressively move them into their bright, summer locations so as not to sunburn them.

Move amaryllis, treated as an indoor plant, outside in shaded location and let continue to grow. If do not plan to bring back inside, plant it outdoors placing base of bulb 8 inches deep (top will be 3 inches deep). Protect over winter with 2-3 inches of mulch. Will bloom in late spring.

Plants that do not need deadheading include begonia, impatiens, coleus, alyssum, ageratum, lobelia, vinca, and salvia.

Gardening Activities for June

Lawns and Landscaping

Mow cool-season fescue lawns to 3 inches in height. If no rain, water at least one inch per week in a single watering. Watch for brown patch fungal growth; if present, apply fungicide.

Mow Bermuda/Zoysia grasses to 1 inch in height. Remove thatch greater than ½ inch by June 15. Aerate if soil compacted. If no rain, water heavily but not frequently.

Shrubs

Prune arborvitae, aucuba, beautybush, broom, deutzia, evergreen holly, Honeysuckle, spring-blooming hydrangea, kerria, leucothoe, lilac, mockorange, mountain laurel, osmanthus, pearlbush, pyracantha, rhododendron, serviceberry, and spring-flowering shrubs not previously pruned as they complete blooming.

Take softwood cuttings of shrubs such as spirea, boxwood, and azalea.

Propagate miniature rose from stem cuttings. Take cuttings with four leaves, dip in rooting hormone, and insert into pots filled with moist potting soil. Place whole pot in a perforated plastic bag and place in a shady spot. Water as needed. By fall cuttings should be rooted.

Feed and prune azaleas by end of June as next year's buds will soon set. Feed camellias and rhododendrons with acid-loving food.

Shear hedges and screens after first flush of growth by tapering shape from narrow at top to slightly wider at bottom so light reaches foliage.

Watch for and control black spot and powdery mildew on rose foliage. Cut off old blooms at the second or third five-leaf leaflet.

Feed roses once this month; prune climbing roses after blooming.

Check evergreens for bagworms and remove by hand-picking them.

Trees

Continue to remove suckers from bases of trees.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Plant melons now that the soil is warm.

Houseplants

Keep indoor plants away from air conditioner drafts.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Weed flower beds early in the morning.

Continue pinching back mums to reduce height and increase bushiness.

Take stem cuttings of woodies and perennials now.

Deadhead—remove faded blooms—and feed perennials and annuals to promote new flowers.

Divide spring and early summer flowering perennials after the blooms fade.

Feed annuals regularly or use timed-release fertilizer.

Dig and divide bearded irises immediately after the blooming season. Lift entire clump out of ground; cut off the side branches that have a cluster of leaves at the end; trim the leaves back to 8 inches; discard foliage and old center portion of the clump. Cut roots back to 3 inches long.

Remove yellow and dry foliage from spring bulbs and set out bedding plants to cover the bare spots.

Water container plants placed outside frequently.

Leach container soils to remove any mineral salts accumulated from fertilizer and hard water. Brown leaf edges and crusting on the sides of containers are indicators of salt problem. Water containers until they drain freely from bottom holes.

Group container plants together near a water source and out of the afternoon sun when going on vacation.

Control Japanese beetles in late June or early July by flipping off plants into a jar of soapy water or using a small, portable vacuum.

Vegetables

Plant pumpkins, gourds, beans, tomatoes, and squash if did not planted in May.

Keep tomatoes evenly watered for healthy fruit.

Herbs

Pinch herbs back regularly to keep them from getting leggy.

Pinch off flower buds on herbs used for aromatic foliage.

Gardening Activities for July

Lawns and Landscaping

Water lawns early in morning and water deeply (an inch) per week in a single watering.

Control broad-leaf summer weeds in Bermuda/Zoysia grasses with herbicide ; fertilize Bermudagrass only.

Shrubs

Use garden hose to wash off spider mites on junipers and other plants.

Remove the azalea caterpillars from you azaleas by pruning the branches swarming with them and submerge them in soapy water. There is no control other than removal; they do harm the plants.

Prune Bigleaf or French hydrangeas (*H. macrophylla*—with large pink or blue snowball flowers) immediately after flowering.

Root holly, azalea, and camellia cuttings in a sand and peat moss mixture. Set in a cool, shady location.

Prune roses and sweetshrub lightly now.

Trees

Lightly prune shade trees, removing lower limbs to let light into gardens and lawn.

Take softwood cuttings of trees, shrubs, and perennials. Dip cuttings in rooting hormone and place in sand or vermiculite in a protected garden corner. Mist daily for several weeks until roots form. Transplant in small pots, then plant in garden in October.

Protect flowering dogwoods from drought stress by mulching in a wide ring with organic materials.

Houseplants

Monitor plants placed outdoors for pest problems and move to calmer spots if leaves are being wind damaged.

Protect indoor plants from strong sunlight that can cause foliage burn.

Root cuttings of coleus, fuchsia, geranium, poinsettia, shrimp plant, Swedish ivy, wandering Jew, wax plant, and others with succulent stems.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Continue to deadhead perennials and roses.

Remove faded flower head and stem of yarrow down to second set of leaves.

Stop pinching back mums; fertilize them and let them develop flower buds for fall.

Pinch back snapdragons and cut back delphinium and phlox to promote a second blooming.

Propagate bleeding heart and oriental poppy after growth has stopped and foliage has disappeared. Dig up a root, cut it into inch-long pieces. Plant pieces in a mix of sand and rich loam, keeping them moist. Once tiny leaves shoot up, the plants will be ready to transplant in spring.

Sow seeds of hollyhocks, English daisies, foxgloves, violas, Canterbury bells, pansies, forget-me-not, and Sweet William now for next year's bloom.

Keep container plants well watered.

Lightly trim scraggly annuals and feed for flush of new growth and blooms.

Take cuttings of annuals and herbs you want to bring in the house for the winter; root them outdoors in shade.

Dig up crowded clumps of daffodils and separate bulbs.

Vegetables

Plant successions of vegetables such as beans and tomatoes midsummer for fall harvest.

Herbs

Preserve herbs by chopping them into an ice-cube tray, adding water, and freezing them.

Ground Covers and Vines

Prune wisteria to side buds on branches to keep vine under control and to promote flowering.

Root ivy and periwinkle now to fill bare spots in beds.

Gardening Activities for August

Lawns and Landscaping

Apply first fall fertilizer--1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 sq. feet--to tall fescue lawn between August 15 and September 15.

Avoid deep cultivation in flower beds as loosening soil in hot dry days reduces water uptake by increasing loss of soil water and damaging surface roots.

Shrubs

Prune up to one third of the oldest canes on hydrangeas in late August to early September. Prune sumac.

Spray shrubs often with cold water to prevent heat-loving spider mites.

Remove 2-3 inches of mulch from base of shrub stems in mid-August to allow stems to harden for cold weather.

Water shrubs deeply once a week to prevent water stress which inhibits starting of buds for next season's bloom.

Fertilize roses; remove old, faded blossoms; destroy diseased leaves; prune lightly for fall blooms.

Trees

Prune beech and linden.

Check and remove suckers on crape myrtles, crab apples, snowbells and others prone to suckering.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Fertilize strawberries with 10-10-10.

Houseplants

Begin to repot those that have outgrown their containers.

Stop watering and feeding amaryllis. Store bulb in dry place and allow bulb to dry out in the pot. In early fall, remove bulb from pot and clean off dead scales. Clean pot and replace with new soil. Repot bulb. Move inside and in 8 weeks bulb will bloom again.

Herbs

Harvest herbs and dry for wintertime use.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Deadhead both perennials and annuals for more blooms.

Cut back for the last time in early August fall flowers such as asters and dahlias so that they will not be too leggy when they bloom.

Order peony roots now for planting in September and bulbs for planting in late fall.

Take cuttings of annuals or sow seeds in pots for winter flowering indoors.

Don't let hybrid annual flowers go to seed as it weakens the plants and reduces blooms. Don't save the seeds as plants will be poor quality.

Remove all annuals that have finished blooming for the season.

Sow seeds of calendulas, Browallia, mignonette, ageratum, marigolds, snapdragons, and others indoors for winter flowering.

Plant fall-flowering bulbs such as crocus, sternbergia, colchicum now.

Select flowers with petals in bright yellow, orange, pink and blue colors to preserve for dried winter arrangement.

Vegetables

Start fall garden with transplants of broccoli, greens, onions, cabbage, turnips, and spinach. Plant seeds of radishes, lettuce, beans, etc.

Stop vine crops from taking over the garden and lawn by pinching off fuzzy growing tips; this directs the plant's energy to ripening fruit.

Pinch off onion flower buds from top of plant to direct plant's energy into the developing bulb.

Plant a winter cover crop such as annual rye, red clover, and hairy vetch to enrich garden soil. Plant from August to November 1. If fall crops are growing, sow cover crop seeds between rows a month or less before expected harvest. By doing this cover crop gets a start and vegetables continue to grow.

Remove old plants that have stopped producing to eliminate shelters for insects and disease.

To determine when to plant vegetables in the fall, count back from date of first expected frost (11/8-11/28) the number of weeks a vegetable requires to mature.

Gardening Activities for September

Lawns and Landscaping

Be sure to apply first fall fertilizer to tall fescue lawn by mid September.

Lightly cultivate the lawn with a hoe as winter weeds emerge for a no-spray control. Alternately, apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent weed seeds from germination.

Seed fescue lawns by Oct. 15. Don't fertilize until seed has grown and new turf has been mown several times.

Don't overseed Bermudagrass lawns yet but wait until October.

Shrubs

Plant new shrubs now through October so they become well established before summer's drying heat.

Don't prune or fertilize shrubs any more this season. Stop feeding roses with granular fertilizers mid-month. Use liquid fertilizers until mid-October.

Prune and remove areas on roses containing black spot.

Disbud camellias japonica to get larger and better shaped blooms. To disbud, leave only the bud at the outer tip of the cluster, removing the mass of buds along the stem. Do this until November.

Trees

Plant new trees now through October so they become well established before summer's drying heat.

Don't prune or fertilize trees any more this season. Rake up debris under crabapple trees and dispose of it to control scab.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Check grapevines for dead-looking berries that have been attacked by black rot. Dispose of these berries in the trash.

Check ripeness of apples on trees by gently lifting an apple to see if the stem easily separates from the tree. If so, apples are ripe.

Houseplants

To avoid injury of indoor plants kept outside in summer, bring plants indoors when temperatures dip below 55 degrees.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Continue deadheading perennials, but don't fertilize them any longer.

Divide canna lilies, daylilies, lilies-of-the-valley, violets, iris, and Shasta daisies now.

Plant outdoor ferns in early fall for best results.

Plant new perennials now through mid October so root systems establish before cold weather arrives.

Keep deadheading and fertilizing annuals until they begin to die.

Take cuttings of annuals—geranium, coleus, impatiens, begonias, and fuchsia--to overwinter indoors.

Sow annuals such as larkspur, nigella, calendula, sweet alyssum, pinks, sweet peas, Shirley poppies, annual scabiosa, and coreopsis now for early blooms in May and June.

Plant peonies now through October and no deeper than 3 inches below ground level.

Fertilize spring-blooming bulbs with a bulb booster type fertilizer.

Begin collecting wildflower and other flower seeds now through Oct.

Start collecting seeds from money plant, columbine, sweet pea, purple coneflower, larkspur, hollyhock, etc., for next year's plants.

Vegetables

Pick off tomato blossoms so plant nutrients go into existing tomatoes. Pick and wash green tomatoes each week. Store until gradually ripen.

Plant cold-resistant type lettuces, spinach, kale, turnip, radishes, cabbage, beets, carrots, cauliflower, snap beans, broccoli, and onion sets in early September.

Leave gourds on the vine until a light frost (early November) or until the stems turn brown. If must cut before frost, leave an inch or more of stem. Wash gourds in soapy water supplemented with household bleach; then apply light coat of non glossy floor wax. Let dry naturally in an area with good air circulation.

Plant asparagus crowns in a permanent garden spot.

Herbs

Plant parsley, summer savory, sweet marjoram, thyme, chervil, dill, oregano, basil, and chives indoor in pots for fresh herbs during the winter now through November.

Gardening Activities for October

Lawns and Landscaping

Overseed tall fescue no later than mid October.

Give a fescue lawn its second application of fertilizer this month.

To keep Bermudagrass looking good over the winter, overseed with annual ryegrass. Do not overseed Zoysia.

Shrubs

Leave old blooms on rose bushes to produce hips, which tell the bush to go into dormancy. Keep your rose bed free of weeds and foliage to reduce the hiding places for unwanted insects and fungal diseases.

Prepare new rose beds now for spring planting.

Tie up branches of climbing roses with broad strips of rags so that wind will not whip them against trellis and bruise them.

Pick bagworms from evergreen shrubs.

Prune potentilla.

Plant and transplant shrubs now. Keep well watered.

Trees

Plant and transplant trees now. Keep well watered.

Prune lightly weak or crowded branches of evergreens to help overcome any snow damage as winter approaches.

Prune elm, goldenrain, honeylocust, linden, poplar, sophora, sumac, and sourwood.

Do not mulch under trees until after ground freezes.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Harvest apples and pears.

Transplant most fruit trees and shrubs now.

Prune blackberries and raspberries now by removing stems that bore fruit. The non-bearing stems will produce fruit next year.

Ground Covers and Vines

Cut back herbaceous vines.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Cut back perennials that have died back.

Move and divide crowded perennials.

Remove summer annuals and replace with cool-season plants like mums and snapdragons. Plant winter pansies, cabbages, and kales by end of month. Mulch plants to keep soil warm and deadhead pansies often.

Start planting spring bulbs now.

Dig out tender bulbs, dry them on a natural surface, and store them in a cool, dry place until next spring.

Vegetables

Thin cool-season greens, such as spinach and kale sown earlier.

Cut back asparagus plants as they start to yellow. Put a good layer of compost on your asparagus plants now or in November.

Plant seeds of carrots, beets, parsnips, and onions now so they will germinate and begin growth, finishing up next growing season.

Harvest root vegetables sown early this season.

Herbs

Clean up herbs. Remove old flower heads from woody and semi-woody plants. Prune only lightly. Add mulch, oyster shells, or stones under branches to keep from contact with soil.

Cut herbaceous herbs to the ground.

Continue to plant herbs indoor in pots for fresh herbs during the winter now through November.

Houseplants

Prune back large plants, especially tropical and semi-tropical plants, before bringing inside to save as indoor plants.

Spray plants with insecticidal soap to kill mites and insects.

Pare away some of the roots in root-bound plants and repot in pots one size larger. Fill in around the root ball with fresh potting soil.

Fertilize with a root-stimulating, water-soluble fertilizer. Don't fertilize again until new leaves are produced.

Start amaryllis bulbs for fall holidays.

Gardening Activities for November

Lawns and Landscaping

Apply third and final application of fertilizer to tall fescue lawns before December.

Apply winter weed control on fescue lawns.

Apply winter broadleaf weed control on Bermudagrass now through Dec. 15.

Shrubs

Prune roses back until they are waist high to prevent winter winds from whipping the canes. Mulch roses to protect during winter.

Continue to deep water evergreens until freezing weather occurs.

Protect roots of azaleas, camellias, laurel and rhododendrons by mulching with oak leaves or pine needles.

Trim hollies and other evergreens, such as magnolia, aucuba, boxwood, and pyracantha, to furnish material for Thanksgiving decorations.

Prune in November/December as well as January/February summer blooming hydrangea, abelia, arborvitae, beautyberry, boxwood, butterflybush, chastetree, cherrylaurel, clethra, deciduous and evergreen cotoneaster, thorny eleagnus, deciduous and evergreen euonymus, gardenia, hibiscus, deciduous holly, juniper, osmanthus holly, photinia, deciduous and evergreen privet, potentilla, Rose of Sharon, yew, and althea.

Remove and destroy bagworms and silvery egg masses of tent caterpillars from shrubs.

Trees

Select a live tree for your Christmas tree. Best selections for Virginia are Fraser fir, white pine, Norway spruce, and blue spruce. Plant outdoors after holidays.

Cut away suckers from the base of lilac, forsythia, and crape myrtle.

Remove and destroy bagworms and silvery egg masses of tent caterpillars from trees.

Prune in November/December as well as in January/February redbud, dogwood, smoke tree, sumac, and clethra (summersweet).

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Add compost to the annual and perennial beds.

Cut back dormant perennials to about 3 inches after several killing frosts.

Cut chrysanthemums down near the ground after they have flowered.

Fertilize pansies.

Plant spring-flowering bulbs after the first fall frost—usually Nov. 11-28.

Tulips and Dutch iris need to be planted in cold soil. Plant tulips deep—8 to 10 inches—to produce large, uniform flowers.

Lightly fertilize bulb beds.

Plant paper-white narcissus in stones in a bulb pan in early November to have blooms for Christmas.

Vegetables

Till compost into vegetable garden or new gardens for next year.

Herbs

Plant parsley, summer savory, sweet marjoram, thyme, chervil, dill, oregano, basil, and chives indoor in pots for fresh herbs during the winter.

Ground Covers and Vines

Fertilize wisteria after leaves have fallen to avoid excess top growth and lack of bloom.

Houseplants

Reduce fertilization and water until late April/May when new growth resumes.

Remember cacti go dormant during the winter, so keep them cool (50F) and withhold water until they show signs of growth in spring.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Remove all mummified fruit from fruit trees and rake up and destroy fruit and leaves on the ground.

Keep mulch pulled away from the base of trees to avoid mice chewing the bark.

Prune grapevines now and in December.

Average first killing frost in fall is 11/8–11/28.

Gardening Activities for December

Lawns and Landscaping

Apply lime now to add calcium to soil and to combat acidity.

Minimize walking on a frozen lawn to reduce winter damage.

Fill and grade around the yard now so soil will settle during winter.

Prepare soil in new rose beds for bare root planting in February. Double dig the soil adding compost or peat.

Shrubs

Prune in November or December the following: abelia, althea, arborvitae, beautyberry, boxwood, butterfly bush, cherry laurel, deciduous and evergreen cotoneaster, dogwood (redtwig), deciduous and evergreen euonymus, eleagnus (Russian Olive--Thorny), gardenia, hibiscus, Rose of Sharon, summer-blooming hydrangeas, juniper, osmanthus (holly), photinia, privet, sumac, and yew:

Propagate forsythia, spirea, Japanese quince, wisteria, mock-orange, trumpet vine, viburnum, and other deciduous shrubs by taking hardwood cuttings. Apply a rooting hormone to cuttings.

Trees

Keep your Christmas tree holder filled with water on a daily basis.

Prune in November or December clethra (summer-sweet), dogwood (redtwig), and smoke tree.

Orchard and Small Fruits

Prune fruit trees as long as the temperature is above 45 degrees.

Keep mulch away from tree trunks to prevent mice/rodents from chewing the bark.

Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs

Cover tender perennials and annuals lightly with evergreen boughs (discarded Christmas tree branches) to protect from drying.

Protect first-year peonies with light mulch such as pine straw.

Fertilize pansies once a month and prune as they become leggy.

Plant tulips 8 to 10 inches deep to delay early sprouting. Daffodils may still be planted now.

Bury tender bulbs previously dug up in potting soil, peat moss, or sawdust if they begin to shrivel.

Vegetables

Continue to add organic compost to the vegetable garden.

Herbs

Make herb vinegars. Add 4 ounces of fresh herbs to 1 quart of wine vinegar and allow to set for two weeks. Pour in decorative bottles.

Houseplants

Trim away, following the natural shape of the leaves, dried brown leaf edges on tropical plants.

Keep poinsettia evenly moist and protect it from being chilled or subjected to drafts. Keep in full sunlight at between 65 and 72F.

Wash leaves of plants with large leaves and smooth foliage (philodendron, dracaena, rubber plant, etc.) with clear water to remove dust and grime.

Collect snow (contains minerals) and let melt and use to water plants.

Wrap gift plants which you transport outside in newspaper; even a few minutes of cold can harm a plant.

Since there is not much outside gardening activity this month, relax and engage in some armchair gardening. Now is the time to review all those seed catalogs that have started to pile up on your table. Make your seed and plant selections for next year; be adventurous and try something new. It is also a good time to inspect all tools, sharpen some and replace others.

