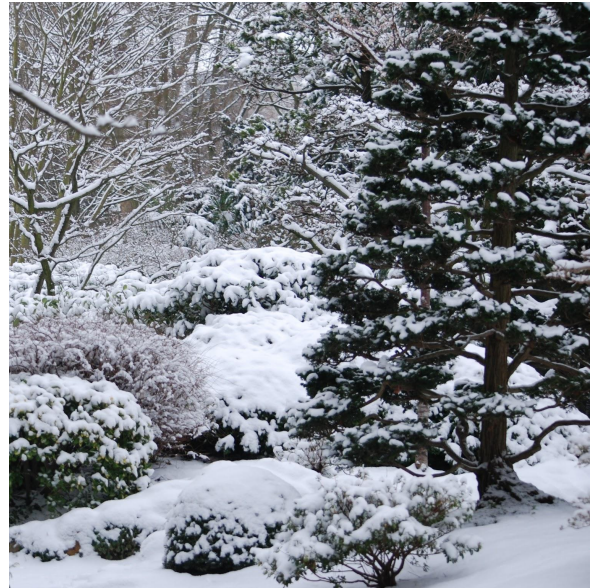


Winterizing Your Garden

A Garden Guide

Landscape

- Fall is a great time for planting trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcovers.
- Plant bulbs now for spring blooms.
- Divide flowering perennials.
- Plant pansies, violas, and ornamental kale now. Pansies and violas usually last until May.
- You can trim trees and shrubs after everything has gone dormant. Do not trim prior to a hard frost as it will initiate new tender growth (however it is good to trim dead or diseased wood any time of year). Trim crape myrtles, butterfly bush, and other more tender things in spring because the extra wood provides them with more winter protection. Leave severe pruning until late February/March.
- Wait to trim hollies, etc. so you can utilize the trimmings for Christmas decorations.
- Pull bagworms from trees and shrubs.
- If you buy a live Christmas tree, dig the planting hole prior to taking the tree in the house.



Veggie & Annual Gardens



- Dry annual herbs for winter use.
- Dry annual flowers for use in crafts & holiday decorations.
- Be alert to potential frosts. Our first frosts are usually early to mid October. Harvest or protect veggies for a longer extended harvest.
- Plant garlic and onions. Remember to water occasionally if dry. Mulch to deter weeds.
- Plant lettuce, greens, and spinach. They will over-winter with minimal protection.
- Plant a cover crop in your veggie garden, and improve your soil with “green manures”.
- Fall additions of manure and lime (if needed) to garden soil are beneficial.
- Test your garden soil for free with the Cooperative Extension Agency.

Bulbs

- Plant bulbs in mid-fall for spring blooms. Favorite spring bloomers are daffodils, tulips, crocus, and hyacinths.
- You can also force these same bulbs in pots. Most require some sort of cooling time prior to forcing, either in a cool outdoor area, or in the refrigerator.
- To enjoy bulbs indoors during the holidays and beyond you can force narcissus and amaryllis. Planting Narcissus every two weeks will ensure almost continuous blooms. These bring a much loved freshness to the indoors during cold weather.



Lawn

- Final mow ~ mow grass to 3"
- Fertilize cool season grasses ~ 1 lb Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. Most grasses in Western North Carolina are cool season grasses.
- Aerate cool season lawns
- Mow leaves on the lawn with a mulching mower to add beneficial organic matter to your lawn.
- Fall is the best time to plant grass seed, or over-sow bare spots. Remember to water.

Start a Compost Pile



- Save fall leaves for your compost pile - they are a valuable free resource of nutrients and organic matter. The compost may be used later in your flower beds or vegetable garden.
- If possible, chip all yard waste that is not diseased and add it to your compost pile.
- Compost piles should be a minimum of 3'x 3' to attain the heat necessary for decomposition.

Fall Container Gardening

- Keep your deck or entry welcoming with fall/winter container gardens.
- Regular size conifers and mini-evergreen conifers make great container plantings that stay green year round. In addition to conifers; hollies, boxwoods, nandinas, yews, azaleas, rhododendrons, and ivies are also great evergreens for containers. Consider the amount of light the plant will receive.

- Pansies flower fall and spring, and sporadically during winter.
- Moss (green moss or Spanish moss), and decorative rocks can cover bare soil and dress up containers.
- Remember to water containers, especially prior to very cold weather.

Winter Watering

- Water newly planted trees and shrubs once a week **deeply** for the whole first year, and during dry spells thereafter. Even in winter...if it is dry, water every 2 to 3 weeks deeply. Water is much more important than fertilizer. In fact, fertilizing during droughts is generally not beneficial.
- Water evergreens just prior to, and just following, a hard freeze. Winter winds can blow all the moisture out of evergreen leaves, including conifers. When the ground is frozen the plant cannot uptake additional moisture to replenish itself.
- Remember to protect your pottery containers, especially terracotta, from winter freeze damage.

Houseplants

- In winter, houseplants refresh our spirits with green and clean the air.
- Start transitioning houseplants from outdoor to indoors when lows are nearing 55F.
- Inspect plants for pests and thoroughly spray with neem oil or horticulture oil in the evening before bringing indoors.
- Place houseplants appropriately. Avoid spots by heater vents or woodstoves that are extra drying, cold spots by windows, and dark locations.
- **Supplemental lighting** and **humidifiers** may be very helpful.
- Inspect plants regularly, including undersides of leaves. Be careful to not overwater. Depending on the plant, fertilize sparingly in winter, or not at all.
- Super fool-proof houseplants: *Spathiphyllum* (Peace Lily), *Epipremnum* (Pothos), *Sansevieria* (Mother-in Law Tongue), *Ficus* (Rubber Plants), *Chlorophytum* (Spider Plants), *Nephtytis* (Butterfly), *Aloe* (*Aloe vera* is the healing plant for kitchen burns). Ferns do well in humid bathrooms.

