

January Lawn & Garden To-Do List

Trees and Shrubs

- In warm climates, protect tender trees and shrubs from frosts by covering them with burlap.
- Inspect stakes and wires on new trees.
- Stake leggy plants to protect from breakage.
- Don't remove snow unless it threatens to break the plant. Do not attempt to remove ice.
- Prune dormant trees and shrubs now. Prune winter-flowering shrubs just after they bloom.
- Don't prune spring-flowering shrubs until after they've bloomed.
- Apply anti-desiccants to newly planted evergreens.
- Bring spring-flowering branches indoors for forcing.
- Zones 7 and warmer can begin planting roses.
- Warmer zones can plant bare-root, balled-and-burlapped, and container-grown trees and shrubs.

Perennials and Bulbs

- Protect evergreen perennials from freeze damage. Use recycled Christmas boughs as extra mulch.
- Check stored tender bulbs every couple of weeks. Discard rotten ones. If they look withered, mist the packing medium very lightly with water.
- Bring chilled bulbs out for forcing indoors.
- Plant bulbs that don't require chilling, such as paperwhite narcissus.
- Sow seeds in indoor flats for spring planting.
- Clip faded blossoms from gift amaryllis, but keep caring for the plant as it grows.
- Replace and add mulch to plants uprooted by frost heaving.
- Zones 7 and warmer can plant summer and fall flowering bulbs.
- Frost-free zones (11 and warmer) can plant spring annuals outdoors.

Annuals and Containers

- Protect tender plants from freezing temperatures.
- Keep watering containers.
- Feed winter-blooming pansies with a bloom-boosting fertilizer.
- Start seeds indoors for summer annuals.

Lawns

- Remember not to walk or drive on frozen grass.
- Apply post-emergence weed control if needed.

Fruits and Vegetables

- Inspect stored fruits and vegetables, and throw away any that look spoiled.
- If your winter vegetables are looking yellow, add some nitrogen fertilizer.
- Prune dormant fruit trees and grape vines.
- Continue applying dormant spray to fruit trees.
- Sow seeds indoors for spring vegetable planting.

Houseplants

- Keep out of drafts and in a bright spot.
- Increase humidity around tropical plants.
- Reduce fertilization, but continue watering.
- Address insect and disease problems.
- Keep plants clean by gently wiping or rinsing.
- Give extra protection on chilly nights by closing drapes and keeping plants away from cold glass.
- Water holiday cactus sparingly, and keep it in indirect light.
- Repot any indoor plants that are pot-bound.
- Cover or wrap new houseplants before bringing them home, to protect from freezing weather.

Cleanup and Maintenance

- Address drainage problems if the ground is soft.
- Have your soil tested.
- Till workable soil and work in amendments.
- Don't forget to feed the birds!
- Clean, oil, and repair garden tools.
- Take your lawn mower in for maintenance.
- Inspect and repair leaky or damaged structures.
- Build fences, walkways, trellises and structures.
- Join a garden club, start a garden blog, or otherwise connect with fellow gardeners.
- Add cooled fireplace ashes to your compost pile.
- Don't use salt on frozen driveways and sidewalks. Instead, use sand, organic kitty litter, or sawdust.
- Clean stored containers using a little vinegar or bleach. Keep broken shards for pot drainage.
- Sit by the fire and make your spring wish list.