

## JANUARY

- If you are spreading ashes from your fireplace or wood-burning stove in your garden, remember that over time it will raise the pH of your soil. Have your soil pH tested before applying more wood ashes. Remember to remove the charcoal chunks from your ashes before applying them.
- As you peruse seed catalogs, choose disease resistant varieties. They make gardening easier and reduce expenses and environmental pollution from pesticides.
- Feed the birds regularly and provide water. Birds like suet, fruit, nuts and bread crumbs as well as bird seed.
- Don't wait until late winter to order seeds, many varieties sell out early.
- Many seeds can be sown indoors now for transplanting outdoors later in the spring.
- Check to see if perennials have been heaved by freezing and thawing of soil. Press down firmly and cover with at least 2 inches of organic mulch.
- Winter is a good time to sterilize your tools and pots. Use 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water. Soak for 15 minutes, rinse and let dry. For tools a protective coating of oil will provide rust protection.
- Overhaul your garden sprayer. Inspect leather washers and the plunger and replace worn parts.
- Paint the handles of your garden tools a bright color. The paint preserves the wood and the bright color makes them easy to see in the lawn.
- Keep pruners clean, use a small sanding block to remove sap and grime and keep the shovel sharp for digging.
- Protect liquid insecticides and such from cold weather to preserve its effectiveness. Check the container for the manufacturers suggested minimum storage temperature.
- Move garden ornaments such as urns or jars into the garage or basement to prevent damage. If containers are too large to move, cover them or turn them upside down to prevent water collecting in them.
- On mild days water window boxes and containers planted with evergreens. Also water established evergreens especially those on the south and west sides of the house.
- Winter is the time to apply miscible oil sprays to kill overwintering mites, aphids and scale on deciduous trees and shrubs. Follow the directions on the container.
- When using salt to melt ice on walks and drives, spread it carefully to avoid damage to nearby shrubs. Consider using sand or sawdust instead.

- Stamp down snow near young trees to discourage mice from nesting under the snow and damaging the roots or bark.
- Brush snow from evergreens and hedges as soon as possible after a storm. Use a broom in an upward, sweeping motion.
- Prune in late winter or early spring summer-flowing shrubs that flower on new growth.
- Cut ornamental grasses back to the ground.
- Prune Knockout and Flower Carpet roses.
- Trim 2/3 off Nandinas top to encourage side shoots and promote bushiness.
- Prune fruit trees and grapevines.
- Winter is a good time to treat fruit trees with dormant oil spray.
- Prune ornamental trees and shrubs.
- Trees and shrubs may be planted now and existing plants may be transplanted.
- Plant new perennials and transplant existing ones.