

January Gardening Calendar

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January is usually our coldest month. Make sure all your freeze protection materials are close at hand—blankets, “Insulate” or “Plankets” to cover, and poultry lamps or mechanics lights for a heat source. Cover cyclamen blooms at 30 degrees. A good rule of thumb for citrus is to cover at 28 degrees and use a heat source at 26 degrees.

There is a new threat to “Knockout” and other roses. “Rose Rosette Virus (RRD)”. The plants would have quit blooming in late summer and produced witch’s brooms and/or rogue stems loaded with thorns. There is no cure and the disease is spread to healthy plants by a tiny mite so infected roses must be dug up and discarded. For more information visit plantanswers.com.

There is still time to plant onions. Prepare the soil by adding 5 cups of lawn fertilizer for every 50 square feet of bed. If you plant the onions every 2 inches in a row, the middle two plants will have to be thinned by mid-March to allow plenty of room for the remaining onions to produce full bulbs. Use the thinned plants for green onions.

Side-dress each 8 feet of row with a cup of lawn fertilizer every three weeks after planting to encourage large bulbs.

Pre-chilled tulip bulbs can be planted early in the month along with larkspur transplants and bluebonnet transplants.

It is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. They perform much better through the first summer if they have time to develop roots before the summer heat.

Live oak, Texas red oak, Mexican white oak, bur oak, cedar elm, Mexican sycamore, chinkapin oak, lacey oak and Chinese pistache are all good shade trees. CPS will provide a rebate if the trees are planted on the south or west side of the house. Obtain the application from your favorite nursery or the CPS website.

Don’t forget the small trees in addition to shade trees. Small trees are important to have a balanced landscape and for wildlife. Consider Texas redbud, loquat, Mexican plum, ornamental pear, crepe myrtle, desert willow, Texas persimmon and oriental persimmon.

Recommended shrubs include viburnum, pomegranate, Texas mountain laurel, old fashioned roses, the tough modern roses, hollies, nandinas and eleagnus.

If you keep harvesting your spinach, kale, chard, and other greens leaf by leaf as you need them, they should keep supplying you until May. The safest plan is to never remove more than one third of the foliage at a time. Use carrots, beets, turnips and rutabagas as you need them, as well. The remaining crop will store well in the cool soil until you are ready to use them.

The paperwhites and daffodils will emerge this month. The lush, green foliage is a welcome addition to the landscape. It is also a good time to plant the forced paperwhites that you received as a holiday gift. They will naturalize in full or partial sun.

Mow the weeds in your lawn for an attractive winter groundcover. It is also a good time to aerate and top dress your lawn. Rent a plug-cutting aerator and then spread one half inch of compost over the lawn. It will filter into the aeration holes and provide organic material for the root system. Use compost rather than top dressing. The top dressing includes sand, which is just a filler. The compost is the active ingredient.

If you feed the birds, you can expect cardinals, blue jays, chickadees, titmice, doves, American sparrows, English sparrows, goldfinches and house finches to come in for easy observation. If you include suet blocks, the mockingbirds, wrens, starlings, kinglets, woodpeckers, and even some warblers will hang about—especially if the weather is cold.