January Gardening Calendar

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January is still a good time to plant hardy trees and shrubs. Roots have an opportunity to develop in the cool soils to help the plants survive the challenges of their first summer. Watch for sales at your favorite nurseries and take advantage of the CPS rebates.

Keep the holiday poinsettias well-watered and they may remain attractive for four or more months. Plant forced paperwhites out in the shrub border after the blooms decline or you become tired of the fragrance.

Be reluctant to take firewood from an unknown source unless it has obviously dried over a summer. Red oak firewood can spread oak wilt if it is still moist. Wood that has cracks and looks dry or is for certain not one of the red oaks should be okay. Visit the Texas Forest Service Oak Wilt website for more information.

If your tomatoes made it this far harvest all the unripe full size fruit before the next freeze and let them ripen in the house. Delegate the plants to the compost pile along with the okra, eggplant, green beans, cucumber, squash and pepper plants.

It is not too late to plant onion transplants. Most nurseries offer red, white and yellow versions of the mild short day onions. The offering usually includes red hamburger, 1015, and Bermuda. If you planted onions earlier, apply a sidedressing of slow-release lawn dressing every three weeks. You should also be harvesting green onions for the table and to make room for the bulbs to expand.

Fertilizer is also important for greens. Cauliflower and cabbage plants are usually pulled when you harvest the single head but broccoli, Brussels sprouts, chard, spinach, lettuce, turnip greens, beet greens, kale, and collards will keep producing as you harvest.

The root crops should be ready to harvest. Pull carrots, beets, turnips, and rutabagas as you need them. Quality will remain high as long as the weather is cool.

English peas that were planted earlier should be producing heavily. Keep them harvested at a young tender stage to maximize production and quality. If you have not planted English peas yet this winter, round up a row of tomato cages and plant seeds at their base.

In the flower garden freezes in late December or the expected freezes in January may cause a break in snapdragon, petunia, and stock bloom. Pansies usually bloom through the whole winter, as do cyclamen if you cover the blooms with a sheet or agricultural fiber if temps of 28 degrees or less are expected.

Protect lemons and limes for the same 28 degree weather. Blankets covered by a “Planket” or plastic work well. If the freeze is expected to be more severe or over several days, provide heat with a poultry or mechanics light.

January is one of the best bird feeding months. The migrants are here and they and the resident birds are looking for seeds and insects. Attract the cardinals, chickadees and other seedeaters with sunflower seed in a squirrel and white-wing dove proof steel feeder with weight sensitive perches. For the American and lesser goldfinches provide Niger thistle seed in a tube feeder. Warblers, kinglets, woodpeckers and other insect eaters will be attracted by a suet feeder.