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Newsletter

JANUARY 2023



Winter Indoor Plants

Care Tips for Cold Weather Houseguests



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PODCAST
011

Season 1
Episode 11

Dec. 14, 2022

The cold winds of winter are blowing, but that doesn't mean your green thumb has to wither away. On this episode of the Garden Time podcast, we talk about indoor plants and introduce you to a few old favorites, some of the new ones on the market, and the best ones for the beginning gardener.



Jeff, Judy and Ryan with guest George Bowman from Portland Nursery.

During the winter it is tough to keep your green thumb from wilting from lack of activity. However, all you may need is to get a few indoor plants. Indoor plants are a 'hot' item the last few years with people sometimes paying hundreds of dollars for new and unique indoor plants. But you don't have to be a plant expert or break the bank to find some beautiful plants to bring into your home.

To get an idea about some great starter plants for your home or office we stopped by Portland Nursery, in Portland, Oregon, and talked with George Bowman in their huge greenhouse area. Portland Nursery on Division Street has one of the biggest and best selections of plants anywhere, and George pulled out a huge assortment of plants that would make any plant lover (beginner or expert) happy.

George had both low-maintenance plants and

some that require a little more attention, but he started with one of the easiest, the spider plant (Chlorophytum comosum). This is a plant for those who don't know anything about plants. Not only does it tolerate the most extreme conditions, but it will also give you more plants to share, with its tendrils creating new plants at the tips of each branch. Because of these little flying plants, it is also called the 'airplane plant'. It is great in hanging baskets because those airplanes hang out and 'fly' around the plant. It likes a medium light and a well-drained container.

We then moved to palms and one of the easiest is the parlor palm. This one grows short and wide, getting to about four feet tall and as wide as the well-drained pot you put it in. It is the entry point to growing palms in your home. The ladyfinger palm was next and it is also an easy one to grow. However, you need to keep this one moist at all

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Chlorophytum Comosum (Spider Plant)

times. This variety is often seen in the lobbies of hotels because it is so resilient and tough, it will just keep on growing. The name is due to the lady-like finger fronds that keep on coming up from the base to a height of 6 feet in your home, larger in larger spaces. Most palms will not grow when you cut the tops down, but this one keeps going because it sends up new canes from the base, making it a perfect plant for the home gardener. If you are looking for a larger indoor plant, the Natal Mahogany is the one for you. Though it can grow over 40 feet tall in nature and in full sun, it can handle the low light situations of the home much better than most plants. It will respond well to pruning, too. If you want it to stay at six feet, you just prune it to six feet and it will continue to thrive.

A lot of people want to have a nice hanging plant in their home and philodendrons will do well in a hanging planter or pot. The heart-shaped leaves are perfect and beautiful, as demonstrated by the variety 'Brazil,' with its wonderful variegated leaves. This is one of the easiest plants to grow indoors. It is a vine so you can train the vines to grow up supports or you can trim them off and it will do just as well. It is easy care for watering too. Just look for when it just starts to wilt and then

water it well and let it drain, and wait for it to wilt again. There are a lot of different varieties so you can easily find one to fit your style or décor. If you are looking for something a little bigger, but as easy to care for, then the spilt leaf philodendron is for you. It is called *Monstera deliciosa*, because it can be as big as a monster! These can get huge with leaves that match the epic size of this plant. They have a wonderful 'split' leaf, but when you get them as a small plant the leaves are solid with no pattern or splits at all. When the plant gets bigger the leaves get their distinctive splits. As the leaf gets larger it can also get some 'Swiss cheese' holes as well, giving it the other name it is known by, the 'Swiss Cheese Plant'. If it starts to get too big just cut it back and it will rebranch and become fuller. The regular plant is pretty affordable, but if you have a few extra dollars you can buy the rare and variegated 'Thai Constellation'. It can get big too, but for this tiny one in a pot it was in the hundreds of dollars. If you want to see how big they can get you can stop by the Division Street store and see one on the wall that is two stories tall and over 20 years old!

While we were talking about big plants it brought up a point about knowing your conditions. Know your space, the amount of light the plant needs,

temperatures and the amount of watering the plant requires. One other concern is to determine how much work are you willing to dedicate to taking care of your plants. Answering these questions will go a long way toward being successful with your indoor plants. It is just like an outdoor plant: right plant, right place. Of course, George also told us that you can treat the plants as a short term plant to fill a spot. You can buy a cheaper plant to fill a space and then replace it with another one if the original plant gets too tall or wide.

We then found a few more hanging types of plants. George brought out a couple of Hoya plants. There was a heart leaf shaped hoyo that was known as a 'Sweetheart' hoyo with large leaves, and a smaller variegated leaf hoyo. They like good, even light and an even moisture, too. The beautiful part of the hoyo are the flowers which George calls a shooting star in an upside down parasol. They have a wonderful fragrance than will take you by surprise.

Next we jumped to snake plants. These are some of the toughest plants and a great choice for any beginner. They thrive as long as you leave them in a tight pot and don't overwater them. They generally have leaves that are very pointy, which may give them their other common name 'mother-in-law's tongue'. The common variety has wider leaves and are known as 'whale tails', and the other specialty types are thinner and have more variegation. They are very slow growing and can handle very low light conditions. In fact, this is a favorite for people who like to have plants in their offices where there is low fluorescent light. They will also tell you when to repot the plant, by breaking out of their pot! These are strong plants and will even break clay pots! Because of this you want to make sure that you get a pot that has straight sides and not curved inward. This will make repotting a lot easier.

Chinese Evergreen (*Aglaonema*) was next and it looked like a small broadleaf bush in a pot. It also likes low light conditions and a tight pot. This brought up another point. When you take a plant home or move it around your home and it encounters different lighting conditions, you could notice some leaf drop. The plant may look like it is dying, this is normal and something you can expect for a lot of different plants. We've noticed it on house plants and also plants like citrus plants when we move them back inside after the summer on our deck. This can also happen right after you repot your plants too. On the Chinese Evergreen, you could lose up to 50 percent of the leaves, but the plant will survive.

While we took a break George went and picked up a couple other Chinese Evergreens to look at. These had a huge difference in leaf and stem color. It really showed the differences in variegation and styles you can choose from.

Next, we moved to some flowering houseplants. We started with the anthurium. A lot of people know this one because of the large waxy blooms that it gets. Most of the time these heart shaped blooms also have a large, bright, spadix (oura or tail) coming out of the center of the bloom. They like to be well-watered but not overwatered. Over-watering can happen from over-attentive gardeners, or because the pot doesn't have good drainage. Be careful to make sure your plant is not sitting in water for long periods of time. Even if a plant likes wet conditions you should be sure that you aren't loving your plant to death by giving it too much water. Anthuriums come in a bunch of colors like white, pink and red.

Another bloomer is the Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*). It too has a large bloom with a spadix in the center. The bloom resembles a cobra's head. This one likes a moist soil, regular fertilization, and can handle low light conditions and still bloom. George told us that it can be easy to forget to water this one and once it goes dry it will need a good soaking to rebound. To help the plant, once it is watered, lay it on its side for a short time, this way the plant doesn't have to fight gravity to get the water back up to the leaves. Another blooming plant is the Prayer Plant (*Maranta leuconeura*). Though the blooms on this one are small, the incredible foliage more than makes up for that. They are highly variegated and full of color with a striking pattern. These are a great plant year round. It is known as the prayer plant because at night the leaves fold up. It also prefers low light and even watering.

We had a side discussion about temperatures. Since most of these are tropical plants you will want to maintain a minimum temperature of 65 degrees. If you like your furnace to kick down to a cooler temperature late at night, your indoor plants may not like that. Always check with your garden center on the extremes of temperature your plants can handle.

Looking at plants that can survive with little or no water and light, we turned to the ZZ plant. The rumor is that you only have to water it four times a year, it is that easy to take care of. It is also said that you can put it in a closet and it will survive, though we don't recommend that! The Aloe was also on the table and it too can survive on a little water, though it will need regular water, just not



Air Plant (Tillandsia)

every week. A lot of people will wait for the fleshy leaves to just start to shrivel and then they will soak their plant well and let it drain, then it is good for another few months or so. This was the medicinal Aloe. So if you get a burn or scrape, you can snap off a leaf and rub it on your skin to help with healing.

The final plants we looked at were the air plants (tillandsia). These are epiphytes, so they don't need soil and in nature they grow on other plants, usually tree trunks and branches. Because they don't need soil you can put them anywhere, even hanging them on a string from your ceiling. For care, you will want to soak them in water about once a week, or give them a good misting a couple times a week. Some people find that a moist part of the house, like a bathroom, is good at keeping them watered and healthy. Once watered, let them dry and put them back on display, preferably in an area with medium light. If you are lucky and keep them happy they will bloom for you with wonderful, colorful, little blooms.

Overall, when you have indoor plants you will want to know their watering needs. For most that may include having them thoroughly watered, but in well drained conditions. Light is very important

for most of these plants and if you want to have plants that require lots of light you can try artificial lighting to help them thrive.

Finally, we moved over to products to help your indoor plants. We started with soils. As George said, 'healthy roots, happy plant'. That means getting the right soil for the plants you are growing. Don't use 'dirt' from your garden, this may be introducing pests and diseases to your plants (and into your home). You will want to use a soil that is formulated for your plants. Cactus, African Violets and Succulents all have specific needs and there are special soils for them and other indoor plants.

Then we talked about plant food and fertilization. Remember, you like to eat, so do your plants. Since these are tropical plants with special needs, they might also need special plant foods to keep them growing. Always check with your garden center to make sure you have the right food for the right plant.

Then we talked about pests. For a quick solution to a bug problem, you can use a synthetic approach. We saw a granular product from Bonide, the Systemic Houseplant Insect Control. This product is sprinkled around the base of the plant and is taken up through the 'system' of the plant. This takes

care of those critters in the roots and the leaves. Another product you can use is the 'Eight Insect Control'. This is a foliar application so you spray it on the leaves to knock down those nasty bugs.

For the natural products you could use the Bonide Insecticidal Soap spray. This is a natural product that will smother the eggs and young insects. If you have a problem with mites, you might want to use the Bonide Mite-X product. There was one last natural product from Bonide called Bon-Neem. This product is a double hit to bugs. The first effect is a quick knock-down action for the bugs and then the sulfur in the product will help control fungus and mites.

Of course the difference between the natural product and the chemical product is the times for application. Natural and Organic products have to be applied more often than synthetic and chemical products. Natural and organic products tend to break down quicker in nature than the others.

Always remember that the label is the law! Always follow the label instructions for proper use and don't use a product for a problem that isn't listed on the label. For a Bonide retailer near you, you can always go the Bonide website. We also recommend that you call first so you can be sure they have the product you need before you show up.

We also can recommend an occasional cleaning. You can mist them with water and wipe them down, or you can use a 'leaf shine' product on the larger leafed plants to knock off the dust and dirt. While you are doing that, check for bugs or diseases. If you notice something you may want to check with your local garden center to narrow down what you find.

We ended by talking about plants and pets. George talked about toxicity. Just because a plant is labeled as toxic, doesn't mean it will be a danger to your pets (or children). Toxicity can mean that an animal can react in a negative way to a plant. For example, poinsettias are toxic, but it would take an animal consuming a very large amount of leaves to have an extreme reaction. Most likely your animal will vomit long before it would eat enough to die. Still, you will want to be careful and know your plants beforehand. The ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) has a great list of indoor plants and their toxicity on their website, that you can check out before you buy.

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**PODCAST
012**

Season 1
Episode 12

January 2, 2023

We are entering a new year and it's time to get back into the garden, and even though it is winter, there is plenty to do! But where do you begin? We have our garden expert Jan McNeilan back with us to give us a starting point with a whole bunch of tips to help you along.



Ryan, Judy and Jeff with guest Jan McNeilan

The coldest time of the year is here and if you are like me you struggle to find the motivation to get outdoors and get some garden chores done. A lot of people think that there is not a lot to do in the garden during the winter but we had Jan McNeilan, retired Oregon State University Extension Agent with us to dispel that myth. Lately we have been outside cleaning up the storm damage and fallen limbs from our fir trees, but she shared a bunch of other chores that we can do right now that will help get our gardens ready for the new growing season right around the corner. That's right. There are some things that you can do now to help you deal with pests, have a better harvest and help you enjoy healthier plants.

Jan showed up with a literal 'book' of tips. This was written by Jan and her husband Ray, but was never published. We knew that we couldn't cover it all but we discussed a few of the points. If you

would like to have more details or to get a more comprehensive list of things to do, check out the Oregon State University Extension website at <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening> for more details. We started by talking about winter fruit tree pruning. Pruning is one of the hardest jobs in the garden. A lot of gardeners are afraid of cutting back their plants for fear of damaging them or possibly killing the plant. This is especially true of fruiting plants! Some believe that if you cut too much or at the wrong time you can reduce your yield! That's true, but if you don't prune, you can reduce your yield as well. If you have an apple tree remember that apples fruit on older wood. Fruit spurs are formed on wood that has been cut back, forcing growth to these spurs. Pruning here is to not only promote the highest quality fruit, but also to increase the size of that fruit. An unpruned tree will produce a lot of fruit, but it will always be small and will probably all

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Pruning Blueberry Plants

mature at the end of the branches creating weight problems and possible damage to the tree. What makes pruning easier is knowing the difference between a leaf spur and a fruiting spur. A fruiting spur looks like it has a wrinkled collar where it attaches to the tree.

Raspberries and blueberries are very popular fruits. If you have them in your garden you might notice that they will produce less and less over time. This is because of a lack of pruning. The blueberry plant will continue to produce vegetative growth (leaves and branches) as it grows and all the plant energy will go into this 'green' growth. By pruning you will focus the plant on fruit production instead. Take a survey of what you want to do and visualize the end result. How tall and how wide do you want the plant to be? Then go in and cut out the diseased and broken canes. Next look for crossing branches and remove those. You will need to limit the heavy pruning to two or three mature canes. They are generally an older brown color. Never remove more than a third of the plant when cutting. Try to keep the base of the plant narrow and open up the center of the plant to promote airflow. This type of pruning will promote new cane growth and more fruit in the future. You can tell these newer canes by their brighter green color.

For raspberries you will also look for those older canes and remove them, focusing on saving the newer canes which will carry all your new fruit in the coming season. Be careful not to trim the newer canes. You might be removing the fruiting spurs.

When you approach your grapes in the spring you may not know where to start. There are so many vines that it is hard to know where to make the cuts. Here you want to look for the new buds. For the home gardener it could be as simple as leaving two vines with four to five buds on them. These buds will grow new canes and those canes will grow your grapes. The key is to not be afraid of cutting. Cutting (pruning) is the key to success. If your vines start to bleed while you are cutting them, don't worry, that's normal. It is caused by the warming of the vines and they will seal up not long after you finish cutting. Also, we recommend that you put your vines in an area where they will receive a lot of exposure to the sun. Grapes will survive very nicely (once they are established) without a lot of supplemental watering. In fact, the vines are not watered at all during the late summer unless there is a drought. This helps to create the sugars that make them so sweet. You should also hold off on fertilizing the vines. The fertilizer will only create more foliage on the plant and that will limit the sunlight that can reach the

fruit.

What if your plant looks like a big mess with a ton of vines (like a bad haircut)? Then you can cut a bunch off and leave two larger vines to become trunks. From those two 'trunks' you can leave upright vines with two to three buds on each to produce your fruit for the season. It is less intensive on the details and will still give you a great harvest of fruit. Just follow these simple rules and you should have a great crop of grapes on your table this late summer and fall.

Then we moved to dormant spraying. If you have fruit trees, now is the time to dormant spray before they start to flower. Dormant spraying will help control insects and diseases during the coming growing season. There are a lot of different sprays and treatments that you can use so be sure to check with your local garden center to find the products that will work for you. We talked to an expert once and he had a simple rule for spraying your trees during the winter months: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Valentine's Day. If you apply your dormant spray during those times you will have the best chance of success. Some people prefer to not apply any sprays at all and for them it is recommended that you keep a close eye on your plants so you can target problems before they get too big. A lot of the commercial

sprays will smother insect eggs, preventing problems before they start. You can spray now before the flower buds open. Once the flowers are open you can let the pollinators go to work and get your tree pollinated. Once the fruit has formed you can spray again to prevent any other problems. When applying these sprays, you will want a nice dry day with no wind.

The change of the seasons also signals a change for your local bird populations. Some of the non-migratory birds will be hanging around and may need a little help from you to survive the cold and wet of winter. We started with food. For seed eating birds you can use a black oil sunflower seed. This is a good basic seed that provides calories for high energy birds. For insect feeders you can set out a suet cake. Use different types of suet to attract different types of insect feeders. For most suet feeding birds, they love insects and if you see a suet block with seed it is generally used as a filler in the suet. Once you have their food needs met, then you need to think about water. You may want to take a look at heaters to keep their water from freezing. You should also remember to put out fresh water whenever you can, since the birds prefer that over standing, dirty, water. The one bird that has special needs in the winter is the hummingbird. They use lots of calories and so their food needs are more critical than oth-



Feeding the Birds

er birds. You can keep their nectar in the feeder fresh by changing it every week or so. You can find a simple recipe for making their nectar online at various sources including on the OSU website, <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/ask-expert/featured/tasty-hummingbird-feeder-recipe>. Plus, they need to have a nice clean feeder so they don't get sick over the winter. You can also welcome birds to your garden by incorporating different types of shrubs and trees. For a list of winter interest plants you can check with your local garden center. To learn more about attracting birds to your garden during the winter you can check with Backyard Bird Shop or The Audubon Society of Portland (<http://www.audubonportland.org>).

We took a break to try and catch our breath and then we tackled a few other subjects.

We then turned to talking about hardiness zones. We've all seen them. Sometimes on plant tags, or on the table signage in your local nursery; 'Good to Zone 7', or something similar. This refers to a 'Zone' hardiness designation that was developed many years ago by the USDA. The 'zones' were a way that gardeners could find out how low a temperature a plant could survive and thrive in. That is the simplest explanation. A zone refers to a range of temperatures where a plant will survive. Each zone represents a 10 degree range. The lower the zone, the colder the temperature range. For example, parts of Alaska are a Zone 2 that means a temperature range of -40 to -50 degrees. A plant needs to be pretty hardy to survive those temperatures, whereas San Diego could be a Zone 10, with a range of 30-40 degrees. If it gets below 30 degrees, a Zone 10 plant may not survive. Talk about your tropical plants! That doesn't mean that a Zone 2 plant will survive in a Zone 10.

In the Willamette Valley we are in the Zone 8 (10-20 degrees) range. Eastern Oregon would be closer to a Zone 6 (-10 - zero). When you are buying a plant, a zone can help you make the right decision on choosing a plant that will survive in your garden. Pick the wrong zone and you may be throwing your money away. To find out your zone, you can go to the USDA website at <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>. Then you can make an informed choice when you go plant buying!

Speaking of zones, snow can still be a possibility in our area. We talked about the recent snow of the past couple of years and the problems it might create for the gardener. These 'events' are mainly snow with little or no frost. Snow events generally are not a big problem. The snow actually acts as an insulator and helps protect plants from frost damage. The only problem with snow is

the weight. If we get a good amount, it can knock down trees and branches, doing damage to large plants in your garden. If we had a hard frost, then you would see significant damage to your landscape plants. Even with small events, some of the new growth on your plants might show some damage when it warms up, but wait to see if you DO have damage before you do any cutting or pruning. Your spring bulbs will be fine with this cold. They are used to this type of weather. Cold weather is a reminder though that you should wait to plant some of your tender garden plants until the soil temperature gets warmer, around 50 degrees. Otherwise, your plants will just sit there and do nothing, or they may die. Even if the day is sunny and warm, it is better to wait for the soil to catch up. Jan marks her seed packets with the temperature they need for germination. For some it could be 40 degrees, for others it could be 60. By doing this, she gives her seeds the best chance for surviving. You can still put your cold weather/early season crops in right now including potatoes, peas and lettuce.

One extra thing that we talked about was watering. Yes, even in the winter you may need to water your plants, especially those that are under your eaves or are in protected areas. Water them well during the warmer days and they will be well hydrated and ready to survive those cold drying winds during the toughest of storms.

If you are worried about your lawn you should remember that grass blades can survive the coldest of temperatures, but walking on them when they are covered with frost is probably not a good idea. Frozen blades of grass can become damaged and when they do it will weaken your lawn and open up the possibility of weeds getting a start. Applying fertilizers is not a good idea either since it is too cold for the plants to take up the nutrients that you are applying. Check the label to see the recommended temperature for application.

As we approached the end of the podcast we talked about planting in the winter and landscape design. Jan recommended that you find the window that you look out most frequently and plant for that view. Then when you are stuck inside you can look out and enjoy the small but beautiful view. For Jan that was her kitchen window. She has a nice variety of plants that are beautiful and also nature friendly so she can enjoy the local fauna.

We then moved to pests. You may see them inside your home during the winter. They are just like us and are looking for a warm and dry place for a few months. Seeing them indoors also may mean that they are outside in your garden too. There are a few things you can do now to reduce your pest



Ice on Plants

problems especially slugs, moths and ants. When we get a nice extended cold spell (which we just had) then you will start to see the pest population drop. Sub-freezing temps will get rid of a lot of garden pests and their eggs, reducing your problems. Baiting outside right now is not a good idea. The cooler outside temperatures are not good for any baits to work to their full potential, plus the rains will wash the baits away at a quicker pace than normal. Wait until the weather warms a bit before baiting outside for your slugs. Baiting for slugs earlier in the season will lessen the eggs they lay. A slug can lay over 100 eggs, so reducing them in the late winter or early spring is very beneficial. Stink bugs can also appear inside during the cold weather. You can squash them or scoop them up and put them outside. Ants come inside too. Using a borax product or barrier product can help reduce their populations. Eliminating the food source that they are attracted to will also help get rid of them. A food source is where you will also find the pantry moth. These little guys get into your cereals, grains, and nuts and move quickly to many other foods. Jan has used a pheromone lure to trap the males and eliminate the populations. Once gone, throw out the foods that they have infected and seal up any remaining containers.

We ended up talking about wood ash too. A lot of

people will spread wood ash from their fireplaces or woodstoves in their garden. It is good to remember that using a lot of ash can change the pH of your soil. It is recommended to spread wood ashes evenly on your vegetable garden. Use no more than 1.5 pounds per 100 square feet per year. Don't use if the soil pH is greater than 7.0 or if potassium levels are excessive.

The winter is the time for planting too. Seed and plant catalogues are arriving in your mail, so it is a good time to start planning your garden for the coming year. While it is still fresh in your mind, write down areas in your garden that didn't perform well and make changes to help the plants in those areas or look at replacing those plants. Jan also told us about selecting plants that don't overwhelm you. She told us about planting rutabagas because she liked them but not knowing how much time and effort it would take to grow them. That was a real learning experience.

Just know that even when you plan for the coming season, things change. No two seasons are alike. Still, winter is a great time to at least get started on your garden and we hope these tips help you get started.

PODCAST 013 PREVIEW

January 2023

We're preparing for our next podcast, and here are some of the topics we plan to discuss. Since the Garden Time Podcast is a free-form format, we never know what might pop up as we talk, but the information below is a loose guide as to where we'll begin. We would love to have your input on topics for future podcasts. Send us your ideas and questions at gardentime@comcast.net.

Coming later in January, we ask the question, "what's in a name?" Why do we use Latin names for plants, and how can that help us when choosing the right plants for our gardens?

If you think the Latin monikers are tongue-twisters, check out the name of some of the quirky favorites we found, such as Mother-in-law's tongue, sneezewort, sticky willy, and Turkey Corn. We'll discover the origin of these goofy names and reveal their better-known pseudonyms.

Animal lovers will be delighted to bring home some new pets that don't need a daily walk, like the kangaroo paw, monkey flower and cow vetch. The stories behind these plants are often as interesting as the names, themselves.

Be sure to tune in for this lighthearted and enlightening look at these everyday plants and their unusual aliases.

Towards the end of January, just as we're expecting the coldest weather of the season, we'll look at some superb winter perennials that you can use in your garden to add color, structure and fragrance.

If you think winter weather means a dull and dreary garden, you'll be delighted to discover how many colorful and charming plants there are that put on a show when Jack Frost does his worst. We'll tell you when and where to plant and what steps to take to ensure these perennial favorites thrive in your yard.

Check our website regularly for the premieres of these topical and thought-provoking January podcasts.



**Sansevieria trifasciata
(Mother-in-law's Tongue)**

PHOTO CREDIT: JALEXARTIS PHOTOGRAPHY VIA FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS



'Nuccios Bella Rossa', Camellia

PHOTO CREDIT: TSUGAWA NURSERY



Welcome to a new year! In January, the air is crisp and cold, the decorations are put away, and there is a distinct lull after the craziness of the holidays. There's no better time to get outside for some fresh air and daylight... and begin your garden's best year ever!

PLANNING

- Create a garden journal for future reference of what worked best, where and when. Consider using a 3-ring binder so you can tab the months and years and add more pages where needed.



- Create a pruning calendar so you can 'Prune according to what the plants needs are'. Do a bit of research first to see how and when to prune your plants this year and you won't be disappointed. Many mistakes can be stopped before the damage is done if a little reading

takes place first. For instance on hydrangeas; cut back only the stems that had blossoms last year. The flowers for this year are going to come from the stems that grew up last year but did not have blooms on them. As a general rule, most flowering plants will perform best if you prune them after they flower. Fruit trees, shade and flowering trees can be pruned this month, but next month will be better. Thinning cuts are better than heading cuts

or 'chopping the branches back'. Again, do some research first so you won't be sorry later!

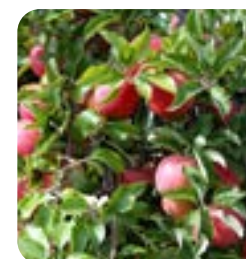
- Plan the vegetable garden. January through March is a great time to get the planning done. Create your 'garden map' with a crop rotation plan set on paper. Figure the dimensions, number of rows, planting dates, etc.



It's fun to look back on these notes to see what was planted and when, what was a great success and what was not so great. Mark your map for this year so you can rotate crops around next year. Rotating your crops discourages disease and insects.

PLANTING

- Plant Perennials. Get them planted soon for best blooming display later this summer and fall.



- Plant some bare root fruit trees. The sooner they can be planted the better the root development will be before the

trees leaf out this spring. More roots grown at this time will allow

the plant greater strength to take on summer's heat later. If you are unable to plant the trees as soon as you get them, 'heel' them into the garden soil on a temporary basis (just bury the roots into soil to keep them moist) until you can plant properly, but do get them into their permanent space in the garden as soon as possible.

- Plant any tree or shrub now that you'd like to add to your landscape. Early planting makes for a stronger start this spring.

- Plant Primroses. Every January, nurseries bring out their spring crop of primroses. Use *dark weather feed* to keep them blooming strong.



W T D I T G

Soil Temperatures Ideal for Growing Vegetables

TASKS, MAINTENANCE & CLEAN-UP

• There is still time left to clean Mason Bee cocoons, but not much! This will be the last month to be able to clean things up before the bees emerge late February or early March.



• Recycle your old cut Christmas tree by cutting it up and using the boughs to cover cut back perennials and any other frost sensitive plants.

• Peach trees: Spray by mid January for peach leaf curl. Use labeled product for this disease like Bonide's Fungonil or Lilly Miller's Microcop. If weather is cool and wet spray 2-3 more times at 3-4 week intervals.

• Check your Blue Spruce for aphids! Most winters around here the spruce aphid attacks the Blue and Alberta Spruce trees. They suck on the juices on the prior season's needles and when the

new growth starts in spring, the older foliage falls off and leaves the tree looking half naked. Spraying them off with a hard stream of water will usually do the trick but insect sprays for aphids can be used too, according to directions.



• Get after any weeds that are growing in the gardens now. Early removal will be easier if smothered first with

layers of newspaper covered in compost.

• Mulch the beds with a new layer of organic compost, bark or other mulch.

• Dormant spray the fruit trees with horticultural Spray Oil to kill overwintering insects and their eggs. Use the Bonide Copper Fungicide spray or dust, (copper sulfate) as a disease control spray now.

• Water any plants that are underneath the overhang of the house or under wide growing evergreens, where soil can become quite dry.



VEGETABLE GARDEN



• Plant early veggies like radishes, peas, onion sets and fava beans. Start seeds indoors for leeks, lettuce, arugula, endive and onions.

• Cover your early crops with Harvest Guard row cover for best protection from cold and insect attack. You can make a movable frame to attach Harvest Guard to with PVC pipe and rebar

driven into the ground.



starts out.

• Monitor garden soil temperature to see what you can plant and when. On the next page is a handy chart of popular veggies and what soil temperatures are ideal for them to germinate from seed, or best soil temperature for transplanting young plant

Vegetable	Will Germinate	Ideal Germination	Transplant Seedlings Out
Asparagus	50F-90F	70F	
Beans	60F-90F	80F	
Beats	40F-90F	80F	
Broccoli	40F-90F	80F	50F
Cabbage	40F-90F	80F	45F
Cantaloupe	60F-100F	90F	65F
Carrot	40F-90F	80F	
Cauliflower	40F-90F	80F	
Celery	40F-80F	70F	45F
Chard	40F-90F	80F	
Corn	50F-100F	80F	60F
Cucumber	60F-100F	90F	63F
Endive	40F-75F	75F	
Fava Beans	40F-65F	50F	
Lettuce	40F-75F	75F	
Okra	60F-100F	90F	70F
Onion	40F-100F	90F	45F
Parsley	40F-90F	80F	
Parsnip	40F-90F	70F	
Peas	40F-80F	70F	45F
Peppers	60F-90F	80F	65F
Pumpkin	60F-100F	90F	65F
Radish	40F-90F	80F	
Spinach	40F-80F	75F	
Squash	60F-100F	90F	65F
Tomato	50F-100F	80F	60F
Watermelon	60F-110F	90F	65F

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