

News Article

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Winter Garden Activities, Symposium

The following lawn, landscape and garden suggestions for the months of January and February are from "Winter Garden Calendar," Purdue Extension publication HO-90, authored by B. Rosie Lerner. Timing horticultural events and practices can vary from year to year, depending on weather conditions. The following information is intended as a general guide. Adjust activities according to local weather and site conditions, and be sure to read and follow label directions thoroughly on all products.

Indoor Plants and Activities

- Keep holiday poinsettias and other plants near a bright window. Water as top of soil becomes dry.
- Check produce and tender bulbs kept in storage, and discard any that show signs of decay, such as mold or softening. Shriveling indicates insufficient relative humidity.
- Check water levels daily in cut-flower vases.
- Repot houseplants as they outgrow current pots.
- Early blooms of spring-flowering bulbs can make good gifts for a sweetheart. Keep the plant in a bright, cool location for longer lasting blooms. Forced bulbs make poor garden flowers and should be discarded as blooms fade.

Lawns, Woody Ornamental Landscape Plants and Tree Fruits

- Check young trees for rodent injury on lower trunks. Prevent injury with hardware cloth or protective collars.
- "Leaf" through nursery catalogs and make plans for landscape and home orchard additions. Order plants early for best selection.
- Cut branches of forsythia, pussy willow, crabapple, quince, honeysuckle, and other early spring-flowering plants to force into bloom indoors. Place the branches in warm water, and set them in a cool location.
- Check mulches, rodent shields, salt/wind screens, and other winter plant protections to make sure they are still in place.

- (February) Prune landscape plants, except early spring bloomers, which should be pruned after flowers fade. Birches, maples, dogwoods, and other heavy sap bleeders can be pruned in early summer to avoid the sap flow, although bleeding is not harmful to the tree.
- (February) Prune fruit trees to control plant size and remove dead, damaged, or weak limbs.

Flowers, Vegetables, and Small fruits

- Browse through garden catalogs and order seeds and plants early for best selection.
- Sketch your garden plans on paper, including what to grow, spacing, arrangement, and number of plants needed.
- Wood ashes from the fireplace can be spread in the garden, but don't overdo it. Wood ashes increase soil pH, and excess application can make some nutrients unavailable for plant uptake. Have your soil tested to be certain of the pH before adding wood ash.
- Prepare or repair lawn and garden tools for the upcoming season.
- (February) Start seeds indoors for cool-season vegetables so they will be ready for transplanting to the garden early in the season. Broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage seeds should be started five to seven weeks prior to transplanting.
- Test leftover garden seed for germination. Place 10 seeds between moist paper toweling or cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep seeds warm and moist. If less than six seeds germinate, then fresh seed should be purchased.

On a local note, area gardeners should consider attending the Whitley County Master Gardeners' Symposium on **Saturday, Feb. 22*** at Indian Springs Middle School in Columbia City. You do not have to be a Master Gardener to attend. The cost is \$35 per person, and additional information, including a flyer/registration form, is available at: <https://www.mastergardenerswc.com/>. Please register by **Feb. 10***. A late fee of \$10 is due after that date.

Finally, find the above-referenced publication at www.edustore.purdue.edu.

***CORRECTION SINCE PUBLICATION IN NEWSPAPERS: NOTE THAT FEB. 15 WAS THE ORIGINALLY ADVERTISED DATE OF THE MASTER GARDENER SYMPOSIUM. THE DATE HAD TO BE MOVED TO FEB. 22, WITH A NEW REGISTRATION DUE DATE OF FEB. 10.**