

*Things you could or should be doing in your garden in...*

## *...JANUARY*

- ☛ Be sure to mulch or recycle your Christmas tree
- ☛ Check holiday plants for dryness; to avoid over/under-watering, water only when the top two inches of soil is dry to the touch.
- ☛ This time of year, houseplants begin to drop leaves as a natural reaction to lower light levels; do not fertilize. Do, however, turn plants regularly to keep stems from growing towards the light.
- ☛ Make sure outdoor potted plants are watered before a deep freeze; this will help insulate the roots as water gives off heat as it freezes.
- ☛ When covering plants for freeze protection, be wary of using clear plastic; the temperature under the plastic heats up VERY quickly once the sun comes out and can potentially scald or burn the plants if not removed in time. Instead, use opaque coverings: Frost blankets, burlap, or old sheets and blankets can work well for this purpose.
- ☛ If a freeze threatens your camellia flowers, cut and bring inside to enjoy.
- ☛ Don't worry if your pansies look a bit piqued after hard freezes; they will perk up with warmer temperatures and sunlight. Deadhead mushy flowers so that fungal diseases will not spread.
- ☛ Add ashes from your fireplace to your compost pile or spread over your vegetable garden plot.
- ☛ If the ground is not too wet, turn your garden plot to expose weed seeds and insects to the cold; do not till if the ground is wet.
- ☛ Spray trees and shrubs with dormant oil and then again with lime sulfur to kill over-wintering insects and diseases.
- ☛ Assess your landscape. This is a great time to really look at the 'bones' of your landscape/garden and assess its overall structure. What's missing? Is an area getting too crowded?
- ☛ Now that all the leaves are off your trees, stand back and look at the structure: Are there crossing limbs, dead branches or twigs, or cracked or otherwise damaged branches? Determine which limbs need to be removed and tie flagging tape or ribbon around the candidates and then step back and observe again from several angles BEFORE pruning.
- ☛ Make sure your pruning tools are cleaned and sharpened so that clean cuts are made; jagged or ripped edges will not heal as well as clean cuts. Use a tool appropriate for the size of the limb you are pruning.
- ☛ When pruning tree and shrub branches, make clean cuts just outside the branch collar (the swollen area just past the bark ridge); applying pruning paint/sealer is not necessary. Pruning should ideally be done during a warmer, dry period of several days so the cut ends can dry out and self-seal; pruning on rainy and/or very cold days can increase the chances of disease, fungal or insect issues in the freshly cut ends.
- ☛ Spend cold rainy days looking over spring gardening catalogs and planning your new spring garden; dream of spring, it is just around the corner...