

WEEKLY NEWS COLUMN
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DECEMBER GARDEN CALENDAR

December means the onset of winter and time outside in the garden typically goes away. However, milder days can mean playing catch-up on missed chores. Take this time to enjoy our feathered friends, take care of the compost, and start planning for next year.

Vegetables and Fruits

- Store leftover seeds and a cool, dry location, for example, in a sealed jar placed in the refrigerator.
- Check vegetables in storage for spoilage.
- Mulch strawberries for winter protection.
- Clean and oil garden hand tools for winter.

Flowers

- Mulch roses by mounding soil 6 to 8 inches deep over the plants to protect the graft.
- Mulch perennial beds with 2 to 4 inches of straw, shredded leaves, or other lightweight material.
- Cut tall hybrid tea roses back to 18 to 24 inches to reduce wind whipping and plant damage.
- Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs until the ground is frozen. Water and mulch.
- Give plants or gift certificates as holiday gifts for gardening friends.
- Empty decorative pots and containers. Store inside or decorate for winter.

Lawns

- Pick up fallen leaves, limbs, and other debris from lawn to prevent suffocation of the turf during winter.
- Store any left over lawn fertilizers in dry location and out of reach of children and pets.
- Store pesticides in a cool (not freezing) dry location for winter, out of reach of children and pets.

Trees and Shrubs

- Keep heavy snowfall from limbs of trees and shrubs by lightly shaking to avoid damage.
- To prevent breakage, avoid shoveling snow onto trees and shrubs.
- Check and protect the trunks of young trees and branches of shrubs for rabbit damage.
- Living Christmas trees are special. Leave in your home no longer than one week, and then acclimate to outdoors and plant in a desirable location.
- Prune damaged branches throughout the winter months.
- Water newly planted trees and shrubs in winter to prevent dry soil conditions.
- Mulch roots of tender shrubs such as azaleas and rhododendrons to keep vigorous during winter.
- Prune branches of junipers, pines, hollies, and other plants to use as holiday decorations.

Miscellaneous

- Start planning for next year by making notes and preparing orders.
- Turn compost pile to encourage winter breakdown.

For more information on lawns and gardens, contact the Cowley County Extension Office 221-5450, 441-4565.

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