



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Helpful Garden Tips for January 2022 (January 1, 2022)

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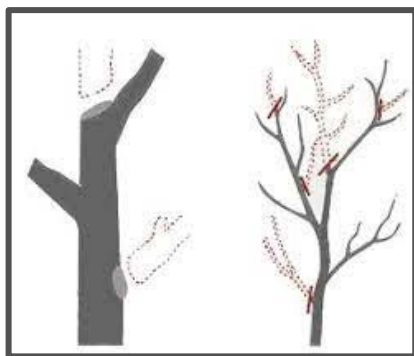


Happy New Year! Hopefully this is a month of continuing snow, rain, fog and misty mornings. That's just what our climate-adapted gardens want. Although growth slows down in the cold soils of winter, some growth continues, often only underground. Our winter and early-spring blooming shrubs, bulbs and perennials love all this frosty damp weather. And what moisture is not used can be stored deep in the soil for later use.

PLANTING: Although we can plant year-round, we usually delay most planting until the (relatively) warmer days of mid to late February. The exception is bare root planting. Here are some tips:

- Bare root fruit trees are now available. Check their pollination requirements; not all fruit trees are self-fertile, and some will require a cross pollinator. Notice the number of chill hours required. Our winters average 700-800 chilling hours.
- Bare root roses-- Hybrid teas, floribundas, climbers, miniatures and shrubs are available. All do very well in the San Joaquin valley.
- Bare root berries and grapes-- Plant grape vines, cane boysenberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries.

You can also plant beets, carrots, leek, lettuce, onion, parsley, radish, seed potatoes, onions, peas, spinach, artichokes, and asparagus directly in the garden this month. Begin sowing seeds for summer annuals and vegetables like tomatoes and peppers in a protected location you can keep the seedlings warm and where they will receive enough light. I might also get in a last sowing of wildflower seeds in a weed-free area. Wildflower seeds love my gravel driveway, so I try to allow volunteers along the edges and still have a space for the vehicles.



MAINTAINING: We have less to do in January, but there are a couple of chores that are perfect to do this month. One of them is spraying roses, deciduous flowering trees and deciduous fruit trees with winter horticultural oil to smother overwintering insects like spider mites, scales, mealy bugs, and peach twig borers. Spray the branches, crotches, trunk, and the ground beneath the tree's drip line. Hold off spraying if rain is forecast, or if the temperature is below 45 degrees. Never spray oil on walnut trees. If you didn't spray your peach or nectarine tree for peach leaf curl in November or December, spray now with a copper-based or a synthetic fungicide. You don't have to apply horticultural oil if you are lucky enough not to have

these specific pests, but if you've had a problem every spring, summer, or fall, be proactive now and keep your trees and roses healthier year-round.

The other main chore of January is pruning deciduous trees, shrubs, and roses. Keep pruners & loppers sharp. Sterilize the pruners or loppers in between plants. Use a 10% bleach solution or white vinegar. Remove all broken, diseased, or crossing branches first. Two basic cutting techniques are used in general pruning: thinning and heading. Thinning cuts remove entire branches, resulting in a more natural look. Thinning cuts are also used to allow more air circulation and light into the interior of the tree and are the cuts to make first. You might

want to take a break midway through and step back to examine the tree from a short distance. You want to end up with a tree that looks balanced and well-structure. Heading cuts shorten branches and should only be used on small branches. Use heading cuts judiciously to shorten over-long branches. You can take off about a quarter of the previous season's growth on these newer smaller branches if you want to keep the tree smaller. Make sure to cut back to an outward facing bud to direct new growth away from the interior of the tree. Prune from the bottom up and from the inside of the plant to the outside. Don't be too nervous about it. Healthy trees will recover and re-grow.

Apply pre-emergent herbicide for warm season weeds. Read and follow the package directions carefully. If you don't choose to use chemical weed control, lightly till your young seedling weeds frequently.

Monitor or turn off your irrigation controller if you haven't already. You will want to deep water if we have an extended dry period, but don't waste water and all the resources it takes for the water to get to the sprinkler or drip emitter if we don't need it.

CONSERVING: I love a good foggy day for chipping some of the brush we've been collecting all year on our rural property. Although we leave brush piles for wildlife, some branches, including the Christmas tree, are great replenishment mulch for our planting beds. Instead of sending leaves off your property, shred them and use them as mulch too.

Another winter job is to make new bee nesting boxes or repair older ones as needed. Often our older ones have filled tubes, meaning they are "in use." We also check to make sure spiders or earwigs are not hanging out nearby waiting to eat the bee larvae inside the tubes. To learn more about this great way to support solitary nesting native bees, visit the xerxes.org website.



A "new" trend is something called "regenerative landscaping," which is what many of us have been doing for years: choosing methods that improve soil, plant, and planet health for the generations to come, even if it is sometimes messy or doesn't result in instant flowers. In all types and sizes of gardens, we can use "least toxic first" pest control methods, tolerate a little wildness in parts of the garden, grow some plants just for the birds, pollinators, lizards, toads or even small mammals, and tolerate some damage in order to keep the chain of life healthy. Plants are resilient. They can tolerate a lot.

This year I will continue to garden with a spirit of partnership with the plants, helping them as needed, but also allowing them to develop relationships with the rest of the garden's life. I'm an important part of this garden, but when I step back (or get busy and am forced to leave the garden alone), I am often surprised at how well things get on without me.

The Tulare-Kings County Master Gardeners will be available to answer your questions:

Visalia Farmer's Market- 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 8-11 am, 2100 W. Caldwell Ave (behind Sears Building)

Hurley Garden Fruit Trees Pruning Demo - Sat., Jan 22, 1-3 pm, Hurley Elementary School, Visalia

Public Rose Pruning Demonstrations:

January 17, 2022, 10:00 to 1:00 pm, Old Grangeville Church, Hanford

January 22, 2022, 10:00 to 11:00 am, Ralph Moore Rose Garden, Hall and Main Street, Visalia

January 22, 2022, 10:00 to 1:00 pm, Woodlake Botanical Garden

Questions?

Call us: Master Gardeners in Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tues & Thurs, 9:30-11:30

Visit our website to search past articles, find links to UC gardening information, or to email us with your questions:

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