



Ah, December. We've finished cleaning up our gardens, and can relax in a cozy chair while we flip through catalogs and dream of next year's garden.

If only.

I still have weeds to pull, pots to stack and pruning to do — let alone halls to deck with holly. Every time the weather forecast tells me that it will be dry or only a bit drizzly, I think, "Oh, good. I have plenty of time to finish the outside work."

Do as I say, not as I do, and get your garden ready for winter.

This also is the time to think about and order bare-root plants: dormant plants that are sold without dirt holding on to their roots. Bare-root plants are less expensive and often settle into the ground faster than their potted siblings. You can get vegetables such as asparagus and onions, blueberries and other berries, roses, fruit trees such as cherry and nectarine, and perennials such as clematis and daylilies in bare-root form. Order them from your local nurseries or garden catalogs. You'll plant them in January.

To keep your poinsettia healthy through the holidays, place it where it will get bright daylight but isn't exposed to the harsh afternoon sun. Keep it away from drafts or heating vents. The soil should be kept moist. Water the plant when the surface of the soil feels dry and give it enough of a drink that the water drips out of the bottom of the pot. Don't let it sit in a pool of water.

There still is time to plant spring-blooming bulbs, but do it soon so they have a long winter's nap. Besides, you don't want to be digging planting holes in rain-soaked soil.

We have another month before it is time to prune roses, but because so much is going on this time of year, I want to tell you now about upcoming rose-pruning clinics.

The San Mateo/San Francisco Master Gardeners will hold its annual rose-pruning clinics in Burlingame on **Jan. 14 and 28**. The Jan. 14 clinic is from 9 a.m. to noon at Washington Park in Burlingame. The Jan. 28 clinic is from 9 a.m. to noon at the Rose Garden on Park Road, located south of Burlingame Avenue.

The San Mateo Arboretum Society will hold its annual rose-pruning workshop from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. **Jan. 8** at the Kohl Pumhouse in San Mateo Central Park. Reservations are required.

San Mateo/San Francisco Master Gardeners rose-pruning clinics:  
<http://ucanr.org/sites/MGsSMSF/classes/clinics/>.

San Mateo Arboretum Society rose pruning clinic:  
[http://www.sanmateoarboretum.org/SMAS\\_Events/Index.htm](http://www.sanmateoarboretum.org/SMAS_Events/Index.htm)

Joan Tharp is a University of California Cooperative Extension master gardener. She lives in San Mateo. She can be reached at [news@smdailyjournal.com](mailto:news@smdailyjournal.com).