



# Winter Garden and Landscape Checklist

DECEMBER / JANUARY / FEBRUARY



## GENERAL TASKS

**Compost:** Turn compost and keep it as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Cover compost during the rainy weather to prevent it from becoming waterlogged.

**Drainage:** Correct any problems in low or poorly drained areas in the landscape.

**Frost:** Watch for frost warnings and protect sensitive plants. Light Frost 32°-29° / Medium Frost 28°-25° / Heavy Frost 24° and below for 4+ hours

**Irrigation:** Reduce irrigation or turn it off completely if rainfall is adequate

**Maintenance:** Inventory all sprays and pesticides; take outdated or unneeded chemicals to a hazardous waste center. Find a center at <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/cd/recycle/options/v5951.htm>.

**Mulch:** Add mulch to garden beds where bulbs are planted, and to areas where weeds have been removed.

**Soil:** Prevent compaction and poor aeration of soil by avoiding working, walking on, or using heavy equipment on wet soil.

**Tools:** Clean and sharpen dull blades, lubricate garden tools and repair damaged grips. Cleaning can be done with soapy water and a wire brush or steel wool; air dry and apply a light coat of oil to prevent corrosion. Tools with wood handles can be sanded and rubbed down with linseed oil. File cutting tools, including shovel blades, to sharpen. Store tools in a dry, covered area. Have your lawn mower serviced to get a jump on spring tasks.

**Weeds:** Inspect lawn and manage rainy season weeds before they flower, using nonchemical methods such as cultivation, hand weeding, or mowing; use toxic chemicals as a last resort. Destroy all roots and underground parts.

## EDIBLES

**Clean-up:** Control overwintering pests by removing fruit mummies and fallen leaves on the ground under fruit and nut trees, especially if codling moth has been a problem. Dispose in green recycle bin (composting this material could reintroduce pests/pathogens).

**Feed Plants:** Fertilize citrus trees in January/February just prior to bloom.

**Plan:** Plan your summer garden and order seeds early.

**Plant:** Bare root deciduous trees, shrubs and vines (e.g. cane berries), fruits and nuts, grapes, and perennial vegetables. For planting, care and maintenance tips see:

- *Berries and Vines*  
<http://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Berries/>
- *Fruit Trees*  
<http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/8048.pdf>

**Propagate:** Cool season, winter and spring vegetables should be started indoors 6-8 weeks before planting out. (Dec-early Jan). Some can be direct sown. Warm season

summer vegetables should be started indoors 8-10 weeks before setting out (late Jan- Feb). Optimum soil temperature for transplanting is 55-60°.

Check the vegetable planting guide for your region.

- *Vegetable Planting Chart for CCC Coastal Regions*  
<http://ccmg.ucanr.edu/files/131285.pdf>
- *Vegetable Planting Chart for CCC Interior Regions*  
<http://ccmg.ucanr.edu/files/131284.pdf>

**Protect:** Watch for frost warnings. If a frost is predicted, protect citrus, sub-tropical and tender plants. Pull the mulch away from trees and water well, keeping the root zone moist but not soggy. If not already done in November, cover trees sensitive to frost.

**Prune:** If not done in November, [prune](#) deciduous fruit and nut trees, such as apple, pear, and stone fruits. Prune grapes and cane berries now; it's too late once they have leafed out. *Note: Apricot and cherry trees are the exception; prune these in Jul/Aug only.*



## LANDSCAPE

**Clean-up:** Do a general clean-up of the landscape on a dry day; avoid walking on wet soils

**Plan:** Select blooming azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons while you can see their color. Order summer blooming bulbs to plant out in early spring.

**Plant:** Container ornamental trees, plants and shrubs except subtropical plants. This includes frost tolerant perennials; hardy spring blooming annuals; summer blooming bulbs; bare root deciduous trees, shrubs and vines (e.g. roses); seedlings of cedar, fir, pine and spruce. Scatter wildflower seed if this was not done in November. Plant azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons.

**Propagate:** Start frost tender perennials and warm season annuals.

**Protect:** If a frost is predicted, water your plants, keeping the root zone moist but not soggy. Cover frost-tender species as appropriate (bougainvillea, hibiscus and succulents).

**Prune:** Prune winter flowering shrubs just after bloom; woody shrubs and evergreen trees; hardy deciduous trees; dormant shade trees; summer blooming vines; hydrangeas and summer blooming perennials. Roses should be pruned by mid-February. Wait to prune spring flowering trees and shrubs until after they bloom.

## INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) - WINTER



### MONITOR FOR PESTS

#### **General Pests to watch for:**

- Ants (Feb), carpenter bees (Feb), earwigs, snails, slugs and yellowjackets (Feb)
- Dormant sprays may be applied to control over-wintering insects, especially on apple, pear, stone fruits (apricot, nectarine, peach, plum), nut trees and deciduous landscape trees and shrubs such as roses. See <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/homegarden/dormant/> for additional information.

#### **Specific Pests to watch for:**

- Borers - Fruit and nut trees (Feb)

#### **Specific Plants to inspect:**

- Citrus - Snails (Dec)
- Pine - Bark beetles, pitch moths, wood borers (Dec-Jan)
- Sycamore - Scale (Jan-Feb)

For further information, refer to UC IPM Pest Notes: <http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/>.

### MONITOR FOR DISEASES AND ABIOTIC DISORDERS

#### **Specific Diseases to watch for:**

- Phytophthora root rot (Dec-Feb)
- Leaf curl - Stone fruit (Dec)
- Shot hole - Stone fruit (Dec)
- Petal blight - Azalea, rhododendron, camellia (Feb)
- Dormant sprays may be applied to prevent disease before new growth develops, especially on apple, pear, stone fruits (apricot, nectarine, peach, plum), nut trees and deciduous landscape trees and shrubs such as roses. See <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/homegarden/dormant/> for additional information.

#### **Specific Plants to inspect:**

- Citrus - Brown rot, root rots (Dec)
- Grapes - Powdery mildew, Eutypa dieback, cane and leaf spot (Feb)
- Olive - Olive knot (Dec-Feb)
- Pine - Western gall rust (Dec-Jan)

For further information, refer to the UC IPM Disease Menu: <http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/menu.disease.html>.