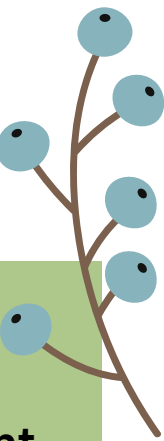




January – Tips and Tasks



Top Priorities

- **Winter Pruning**
 - Prune deciduous trees and shrubs while they are dormant. This promotes healthy growth and enhances the structure of the plants. This is a good time to remove branches that are low hanging or have been damaged by snow and ice.
- **Protect Vulnerable Plants**
 - Shield sensitive plants from harsh winter weather, by using frost blankets, mulch or other protective measures.
 - Heavy snow and ice can damage shrubs. Use a broom to gently push up the limbs to dislodge snow and prevent breakage.
- **Inspect for Pests**
 - Check for signs of pests on dormant plants. Treat any issues promptly to prevent infestation, when the growing season returns.
 - Remove and destroy bagworms from affected trees if seen on evergreens.
 - Be on the look out for spotted lantern fly egg masses on the trunks of trees and other surfaces. Scrape them off and discard.
- **Plan Your Garden**
 - Use winter months to plan your garden layout, select new plants and order seeds. Consider crop rotation and companion planting strategies. Focus on plants to be divided, transplanted, added, or eliminated from the garden.
 - Get a head start on weeding. Chickweed and wild onion like to sprout in garden beds. Use warmer days to pull these from your garden.



Next Steps

- **Winter Mulching**
 - Add a layer of mulch to insulate soil and protect plant roots from temperature fluctuations. This is beneficial for young and newly planted shrubs.
- **Tool Maintenance**
 - Clean and sharpen gardening tools. Clean pruners with rubbing alcohol. Well-maintained tools make gardening tasks more efficient and prevent the spread of diseases.
 - Have small equipment such as lawn mowers maintained while not in the busy season.
- **Soil Testing**
 - Understanding your soil's composition by getting a soil test helps in planning appropriate amendments for the upcoming growing season.
- **Start Seeds Indoors**
 - By starting your seeds indoors, your plants get a longer growing season. This gives them a head start before the outdoor growing season.



Better Impact

- **Bird Friendly Additions**
 - Install bird feeders and birdhouses to attract and support local bird species during the winter months
- **Winter Interest Plants**
 - Consider adding plants with interesting bark, berries or evergreen foliage to create visual interest in your winter garden
 - Plant an amaryllis bulbs to add dramatic color to homes and gardens! Keep it in a sunny window. After it is done flowering, the plant will produce leaves. With proper care, the bulb can rebloom.
- **Compost Turning**
 - Turn your compost pile to encourage decomposition. This aerates the material and helps produce nutrient-rich compost for your spring garden.
- **Hardscape Maintenance**
 - Inspect and repair any damage to paths, fences, or other hardscape elements. Winter is an excellent time for these tasks.

Extras

- **Grow an Edible Garden Indoors**
 - Try growing greens indoors using hydroponics. Indoor herbs benefit from daily misting and full sun windows
- **Garden Education**
 - Take the time to educate yourself about new gardening techniques, plant varieties, or sustainable practices. Attend virtual gardening workshops or read gardening books.



In Virginia, January is a time for careful planning and preparation. By addressing these tasks, you'll set the stage for a successful and vibrant garden in the coming months.

