

Bell County Master Gardeners
Tip of the week
By Joyce Friels

Winterizing Your Garden

Let your plants be happy during the colder winter months. If you do some pre-planning, they will be content to lie in wait for the warm spring rains and warming temperatures while storing energy needed to grow healthy root systems.

Take a walk through your landscape to see how everything looks. Decide at this time what plants are overgrown and need to be thinned out or divided; which plants are looking scraggly and should be trimmed up; or which plants should be pulled out and added to the mulch pile or relocated. This is the time to divide and relocate spring blooming perennials and bulbs. Trim out any dead foliage on plants that are happy, clear out all dead debris, and add new mulch. Tender perennials that are in containers should be brought inside.

Trees and shrubs can be added to the landscape now, as well as roses. In fact, this is the ideal time to plant them! . Trees and shrubs planted at this time while the soil is still warm encourages new root growth and the cooler weather enables them to do dormant which reduces stress.

Roses will benefit from being planted in the cooler months as they have time to establish a good root system. Late fall planted roses are more likely to be more vigorous during their first summer and give more blooms. However, do not fertilize roses planted now. If you feed them from now until February, it will interfere with dormancy and any new growth will be damaged by cold weather! Just remember to feed them in the spring and they will reward you with many blooms. If you need to move a rose bush to another place, now is also the time to move it.

Cool season nursery plants such as chrysanthemums, pansies, snapdragons, dianthus, annual phlox, calendula, and nicotiana can be planted. You can also direct seed poppies, larkspur, sweet pea, marigolds, and wild flowers, especially bluebonnets! The spring showing will brighten your days after the winter season.

Any questions? Contact ask.bcmga@gmail.com