

Gardening in December

There is plenty to do in and for your garden and landscape even during the cold months.

Plant: Plant spring flowering bulbs this month. Plant your tulip bulbs after they have had 6 to 8 weeks of chilling. Still time to plant pansies, snapdragons, and ornamental kale as well as shrubs and fruit and ornamental trees.

Prune: Late December through February is ideal for pruning fruit and ornamental trees as well as shrubs. Do not prune your spring flowering shrubs, however. If you are taking Christmas greenery from your hollies or evergreen trees, be careful not to destroy the natural form and beauty of the plant.

Garden and Flower beds: Remove dead plants and clean up the beds in general. Apply a layer of compost and then mulch. Don't forget that perennials still need to be watered in the winter during dry spells.

Planning: Plan your 2016 garden and begin selecting and ordering seeds so you will have them available when you are ready to plant. If you want to try growing your own transplants for tomatoes, broccoli, and cauliflower, for example, it is especially important to get those seeds ordered this month to be ready to begin planting in January. The Aggie-Horticulture website has a list of suggested varieties for vegetables. Go to http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/

Select your county from the pull-down menu and click "Search by County." Select a specific vegetable crop for a list of recommended varieties for that vegetable or click on "Select All Vegetable Varieties" for a comprehensive list of all vegetables from artichokes to watermelon. These charts give the best varieties for our area as well as the days to harvest. For a print version, select "Download PDF" under the word *recommended* on the chart showing all varieties.

Another area of the Aggie-Hort site is <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/>.

In the "Guides" area the "Texas Home Vegetable Gardening Guide" is a comprehensive guide that includes garden site selection tips, soil preparation, seed selection guides, a spring and fall planting guide and ending with a harvest and yield chart.

For gardening questions call 903-583-5473 or email questions to

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380 words

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