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Things To Do During Covid: Keep Busy in the Garden

By Lydia Holley

The shortages of supplies experienced during the Covid pandemic has compelled many people to turn to gardening, especially vegetable gardening. This gives them a sense of control and self-sufficiency. Working in the garden is also a great way to get some exercise, enjoy fresh air, and absorb some natural vitamin D.

Although we are getting some cold, rainy, and even snowy days, we are also having days that are warm enough to enjoy. Dress in layers so you can remove a layer or two as the sun and activity warms you up.

If you are gardening for vegetables, January is the time to plant English peas. Plant them outdoors with a trellis of some sort for them to climb. I've seen ornamental metal trellises, bamboo stakes twined together, and numerous other types of supports used. Determine which fits your budget and your garden style.

Should the weather be too cold to venture outside, you can also start several types of vegetable seeds indoors now for planting outdoors later. My favorite to start now are tomato seeds. They are easy enough to germinate, can be planted deep if they grow leggy, plus they remind me of summer days and tastes I will enjoy in the future.

In addition to vegetables, many types of flower seeds can be started in January, most indoors, but a select few can be planted or scattered outside. If you have not broadcast poppy seeds yet, they can still be successfully germinated if you scatter seeds in the garden soon.

When the days are nice enough to be outside digging, gather several trowels worth of soil for testing. Then you will be able to add the proper fertilizer for your particular needs, instead of guessing. A soil test can be obtained by calling the number below, and the results are emailed back to you. You can then go online to see which fertilizers meet your requirements the best.

Mulch can be refreshed as you tidy the garden by removing old stems, cutting back dead limbs, and digging out winter weeds. Many trees can be pruned before they break dormancy. Fruit trees are available at garden centers and they can be planted while dormant, provided the soil is not too wet.

You can grow an abundant amount of food to eat, store, and share. Plus, if you have made a New Year's resolution to stay active or get more exercise, you can clearly see that gardening can help you achieve those, all without leaving your own backyard.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com, or visit txmg.org/hendersonmg.

