



# JANUARY IN THE GARDEN

Sources: Texas Garden Almanac by Dr. Doug Welsh, Professor & Horticulturist/Texas A&M University, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc. ([www.fbmng.com](http://www.fbmng.com)) and A Garden Book for Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast by Lynn M. Herbert and the River Oaks Garden Club.

## Garden Tasks



- \* Cool-season annuals planted in the fall will benefit from a light application of a balanced fertilizer every 4-6 weeks throughout the winter. Mulch flower beds to keep weeds from germinating.
- \*Take time in midwinter to plan new additions to the landscape such as a butterfly garden, herb garden, statuary or a new tree. Look through garden magazines and catalogues for creative ideas.
- \*Add organic matter to open (i.e. unplanted) vegetable gardens and flower beds. Composted or aged manure, fallen leaves and pine straw, added now, will have time to break down before spring planting.
- \*Refrain from pruning off freeze-damaged plant material because it actually provides some insulation for healthy plant tissue. Pruning is best done in February and March.
- \*Keep up with winter weeding. Herbicides should be used only as a last resort.
- \*Transplant trees and shrubs in your landscape during the dormant season. This will greatly increase their chances of survival.

## What to Plant



- \*You can still plant cool-season flowering (pansies, violas, stock, snapdragons, dianthus) or foliage plants (ornamental cabbage and kale, dusty miller). They will continue blooming into the spring with care.
- \*January is a good time to plant those tulip and hyacinth bulbs that have been chilling in the refrigerator. This is also a good time to start warm-season flowers and vegetables indoors from seed to be set out in spring as transplants.
- \*Many cool-season vegetables can still be planted this month. Asparagus crowns, onion transplants and artichoke plants (with some protection) can be set out. Transplants of broccoli, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, mustard, kohlrabi, collards, kale, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts are all cold hardy and need to go in soon to allow enough time for growth and production before the weather heats up. Beets, carrots, English peas, greens, leaf lettuces, radishes, sugar snap and snow peas and turnips can be sown from seed this month. Tomatoes and peppers need at least six weeks to grow into a stout transplant when planted from seed. Check the last frost date for your area and count back 6-8 weeks for seeding tomato transplants. Peppers prefer warmer temperatures, so start them about 2 weeks after the tomatoes.
- \*Remember to add organic matter to your beds and mulch for added protection from the cold. If a freeze is expected, plants will need to be covered.
- \*You can begin purchasing and planting bare-root roses, fruit and nut trees. Make sure the varieties of fruit and nut trees are recommended for your area. Also, check if they are self-fruitful or need a second cultivar for cross pollination.



Don't forget to provide food and water for the feathered visitors to your garden. Winter can be especially hard for them. More birds die from lack of water than lack of food!