

Gardening Calendar

Conditions during each season in your location will determine the actual timing of your garden work. If you have questions regarding the timing of garden activities in your area, please feel free to ask a Master Gardener at HelenaMasterGardeners@hotmail.com.

November:

- Drain hoses and sprayers
- Store garden chemicals properly for the winter. Check product labels to see if freezing will harm the products

If ground has not yet frozen:

- Pull dead annual flowers from beds and pots. Pull out old vegetable stems and /or turn over in bed
- Dig up gladiolus, tuberous begonias, cannas, and dahlias and store in cool dark location. (see article on page)
- If dry conditions exist, water (early in the day): lawns, trees (especially evergreens), and shrubs to prevent winter desiccation; if soil is dry one inch down, water perennials
- Fall tilling helps improve soil structure and usually leads to soils warming up and drying faster in the spring, allowing for earlier planting.
- Dig out new beds, adding compost, organic matter and raked up leaves.
- Plant spring bulbs including daffodils, crocus and tulips.
- Apply winter mulch to strawberries when plants are dormant but before temperatures drop below 20°F.
- Protect the graft union on rose bushes by mounding soil up 12 inches around the plants and adding mulch on top. Wait until after several killing frosts have occurred so that plants will be dormant when covered. Plants covered too early may be smothered
- Trim chrysanthemums to 4 to 6 inches after they finish blooming—
- Cut back dead perennial stems and remove all diseased debris such as powdery mildew, but leave ornamental grasses. Bag diseased debris and discard.
- Renew mulch to cover bare ground around perennial flowers, especially those exposed to winds or lots of sun. As a general rule do not mulch perennial beds until after the top inch or two of soil has frozen, to discourage rodents from nesting..
- Cover rhubarb and asparagus beds with composted manure and straw.
- Protect tender evergreens from drying winds with burlap or other type shield.
- Prune dead, diseased, or damaged branches from trees and shrubs.
- clean, sharpen, and oil garden tools. Clean and oil lawnmower; check owner's manuals for how to winterize mower and other power equipment.
- Prevent rabbit and rodent feeding damage by erecting physical barriers, such as metal mesh (1/4") hardware cloth. Pull mulch away from the trunk a few inches because the mulch provides a warm winter home for rodents.
- Prevent frost cracking (or sunscald) by wrapping tree trunks with tree wrap or painting the south and southwest facing sides of the trunk with white latex outdoor paint. Young, thin-barked trees such as maples and many fruit trees are especially susceptible.
- Watch for aphids and other pests on container plants that will spend the winter inside. Rinse with steady spray of water and treat with insecticidal soap thoroughly. Consider re-potting in new soil
- Reduce fertilizer applications to houseplants

December

- Check stored flower bulbs, vegetables, fruits for rot and fungus problems. Discard any showing signs of rot. Inspect stored vegetables, fruits and bulbs for any damage. Remove sprouts from potatoes.
- As dry spells occur, check the soil around trees and shrubs and other perennials and water (early in the day).
- Take seed inventory and plan next year's garden. Plan on rotating crops to discourage pests and diseases.

Useful Links and Contacts

MSU Extension Yard & Garden: <http://www.msuextension.org/category.cfm?Cid=5>

Missoula Plant Diagnostics Database: <http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/extension/plantdata/>

National Center for Appropriate Technology gardening publications: <http://www.attra.org/horticultural.html>

National Garden Association: <http://www.garden.org/>

Helena Garden Club: <http://helenagardenclub.wordpress.com/>

Lewis & Clark County Extension Office Web site: <http://www.co.lewis-clark.mt.us/index.php?id=75>

MSU Master Gardener Program: <http://www.mtmastergardener.org/>

Helena Community Gardens: <http://helenagardens.org>

Helena Master Gardeners: HelenaMasterGardeners@hotmail.com

Brent Sarchet, Lewis & Clark County Agricultural Extension Agent: (406) 447-8346 bsarchet@co.lewis-clark.mt.us

Newsletter Contributors

Brent Sarchet
 Judy Halm
 Sue Leferink
 Ann Prunuske
 Maureen Kiely