

**A
Real
Conifer;
Stabilizes soil.
Emits fresh oxygen.
Protects water supplies.
Creates a scenic green belt.
Provides refuse for wildlife.
Absorbs carbon dioxide and other gases.
Recycled real Christmas trees create mulch
for gardens and landscaping.
For every real Christmas tree harvested,
at least three seedlings are planted in its place.
Protects soils which may not support other crops.
One acre of trees = oxygen for 18 people per year.
Real trees recycle back to the earth from where they started.**

REAL TREES ARE GOOD.

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Garden Guide

Things to do this month

Be sure not to store apples or pears with vegetables. The fruits give off ethylene gas which speeds up the breakdown of vegetables and will cause them to develop off-flavors.

After the ground freezes, mulch small fruit plants such as strawberries. One inch of straw or leaves is ideal for strawberries.

Remove all mummified fruit from fruit trees and rake up and destroy those on the ground. Also, rake and dispose of apple and cherry leaves. Good sanitation practices reduce reinfestation of insects and diseases the following season.

African violets do well when potted in small pots. A good general rule is to use a pot one-third the diameter of the plant. Encourage African violets to bloom by giving them plenty of light. They can be in a south window during dark winter months. They bloom beautifully under fluorescent lights.

Clean power tools of all plant material and dirt. Replace worn spark plugs, oil all necessary parts and sharpen blades. Store all tools in their proper place indoors, never outdoors where they will rust over the winter.

Clean and fix all hand tools. Repaint handles or identification marks that faded over the summer. Sharpen all blades and remove any rust.

Order seed catalogs now for garden planning in January. For variety, consider companies that specialize in old and rare varieties or wild flowers.

Bring out the bird feeders and stock them with bird seed for the birds. Remember to provide fresh water for them too.

Place Christmas trees away from fireplaces, radiators, heat vents and anything else that could dry the needles. Keep your Christmas tree well watered from the time it is brought home until it is discarded.

Minimize traffic on a frozen lawn to reduce winter damage.

Inspect trees and shrubs for bagworm capsules. Remove and destroy them to reduce next year's pest population.

House plants with large leaves and smooth foliage such as philodendrons, dracaena and rubber plant, benefit if their leaves are washed with a damp cloth to remove dust.

A home weather station that includes a minimum-maximum thermometer, a rain gauge and a weather log is a good gift for a gardener.

Start reviewing your garden notes to help with next year's plans.

Check fruits, vegetables, corms and tubers you have in storage. Sort out any showing signs of rot and dispose of them.

Holiday Safety for Your Home

The holiday season is here! If you are like me, you are excited about the holidays and have already started or maybe even finished decorating the house and yard.

Many of you put your Christmas tree up right after Thanksgiving. This year you may have decided to have a real tree. Be sure to select a fresh tree. If you cut the tree yourself you know the tree is fresh. But if you do not cut your own tree, be sure to ask when the tree was cut and check it closely for drying needles. Dry greenery and Christmas trees can be a fire hazard this time of year in your home.

The stump of your Christmas tree should be cut fresh before placing the tree in the tree stand. Keep an adequate supply of fresh water covering this fresh cut at all times. Check the water level daily, and refill when needed. The cooler you can keep the room where you have the Christmas tree, the longer it will stay fresh and green. Do not

place the tree near a heat vent, wood stove or fireplace.

At the first sign of needle drop and drying you should dispose of the Christmas tree. A single spark can ignite a dry tree. Use some of the discarded tree material as a mulch over dormant perennials or as a haven for wildlife in a nature area.

Holiday greenery used for decoration should be watched very carefully for signs of drying. Evergreen boughs and wreaths can dry in just a few days. A cigarette ash or match could easily start a fire in one of these center pieces. Never leave an unattended candle burning. Blow out candles in these center pieces after the meal is over.

When decorating landscape trees and the exterior of the house, be careful. Make sure you have a sturdy ladder and someone to help hold the ladder when you are stringing lights in high places. When you are on a ladder, do not lean out or reach. Climb down and move the ladder to a better location. Please have a safe holiday season. (MJF)

Making a Holiday Wreath

A wreath is an attractive, easy-to-make decoration for the upcoming holiday season.

Materials needed to construct a wreath include pruning shears, scissors, wreath frame, No. 22 or 24 gauge florist wire, wire cutter and evergreen branches. Decorative materials, such as ribbon, bows, pine cones, holly, various fruits and ornaments, may be used to finish the wreath.

When selecting a wreath frame, individuals can choose from box wire, crimped wire, styrofoam and straw frames. An ordinary wire coat hanger may be fashioned into a small wreath frame. Frames, florist wire and other materials can be purchased at craft or hobby stores.

Evergreen branches can be obtained from the home landscape. A small amount of careful and selective pruning will not harm the trees and shrubs. Greens may be purchased from garden centers, florist shops and Christmas tree lots or farms. Additional materials, such as pine cones and bittersweet, can be purchased or collected outdoors.

A 15-inch diameter wreath

frame is ideal for most home decorations. Cut the greens into 4 to 6 inch sections. Begin by firmly attaching the end of the wire roll to the frame. Place a small bundle of greens on the frame; then fasten the base of the twigs tightly to the frame with 2 or 3 turns of the wire.

Position the second bundle of greens so as to cover the base of the first group.

Continue this procedure around the frame, placing the groups close together to produce a thick, full wreath. Tuck the base of the final bundle of greens beneath the foliage of the first group and fasten it to the frame. Decorate the wreath with a bow, cones, ornaments, etc. Wire each item separately and fasten it to the frame. Finally, attach a wire hanger to the top of the wreath frame.

The wreath is now ready for hanging.

TIPS: When constructing wreaths, use only fresh greens. Needles on old material will be dry and brittle. Fresh material will have a strong fragrance and pliable needles.

Wreaths hung

outdoors should remain fresh for 3 to 4 weeks.

The average life of an indoor wreath,

however, is about 7 to 10 days. Indoor

wreaths should be promptly removed when they become dry. The life of an indoor wreath can be prolonged by hanging it up only during special holiday occasions. Carefully place the wreath in a plastic bag and store in a cool location, such as a garage, during the remaining time. (MJF)



Care of Cyclamens

Cool temperatures and bright light is the prescription for success with cyclamen. Place this flowering plant in an east window. A daytime temperature of 60 to 65° F and a night time minimum temperature of 50° F should keep it blooming well into next year.

The white, red or pink flowers grow tall with nodding stems above the rosette of heart-shaped, blue-green to dark green

leaves. The foliage is marked with white veins and light green splotches.

Water the cyclamen whenever the soil begins to feel dry and try to keep the soil around the roots moist at all times.

Water with lukewarm water and be careful to keep it off the foliage and crown as the plant is very susceptible to crown rot.

Fertilize the plant with a houseplant fertilizer using one-

half the recommended strength every two weeks while it is flowering. When new flowers cease to appear and the leaves turn brown, reduce the frequency and amount of watering and place the pot in a cool spot.

After flowering, let it rest until warm spring weather arrives. Repot in a mixture of equal parts houseplant potting soil and peat moss, with half the crown above the soil. (MJF)



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