

DECEMBER

in the garden



Gardening doesn't stop in Texas in December, but it does slow down considerably. Use the time to catch up on your note-taking and get some "catalog" time in. Mulch, mulch, mulch. Sometimes it's the only way to protect cold-tender plants. Spider mites thrive in warmth. Be sure to check your indoor plants for mites and take appropriate action.



BIRDS AND WILDLIFE:

- Suet is available in easy-to-use blocks that attract the woodpeckers, chickadees and titmice.
- Use weight-sensitive metal feeders.

COLOR:

- After they freeze back, you can cut lantana, mallow hibiscus, esperanza and other cold sensitive plants to the ground.
- Get those spring-flowering bulbs in the ground this month.
- Plastic cups sunk in the ground and ½ filled with beer attract and drown slugs and snails. They like Budweiser best.
- It is not too late to plant pansies.
- December is a good time to transplant roses.



SHADE TREES AND SHRUBS:

- Mulch the fallen leaves with your lawn mower.
- Eliminate the mistletoe (a parasite) from your trees after the leaves fall.
- It's OK to plant trees in December...even bare-root trees.
- Consider a living Christmas tree. Arizona cypress or Italian Stone pines do well.
- December is a good month to prune oak trees. Avoid topping.
- Plant fruit trees on 8' x 8' raised beds with drip irrigation.



FRUITS AND NUTS:

- This is a good month to plant bare root fruit and pecan trees.
- Wait until January to do any major fruit tree pruning.
- Collect pecans as they fall to the ground.



VEGETABLES:

- Side-dress your cole crops and onions with a cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer or ammonium sulphate per 10 feet of row.
- If tomatoes are full sized, but not showing any color, pick them and bring them into the house. They'll ripen on the counter.

TURF GRASS:

- St. Augustine that is dry is very susceptible to freeze damage.



ORNAMENTALS:

- It's a good time to plant irises, daylilies, and other perennials.
- Divide spring and summer-flowering perennials during fall.