

Village Garden Center & Landscape Service

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Top of the list this month

Wisteria needs pruning in summer and winter to encourage flower buds and control vigorous growth. Prune in January or February when the plant is dormant and leafless, cutting side shoots back to two or three buds. Tidy it up before the growing season starts.

Cymbidium is one of the easiest orchids to grow, preferring cooler growing conditions than some other tender indoor orchids. Provide winter growing temperatures between 10-14°C (50-57°F) and ensure it has good light levels. At this time of year, reduce watering to approximately once a fortnight.

If you missed planting in November or December you can still plant out rhubarb crowns now. If necessary, planting can continue up to March. Buy named cultivars or choose a division from a strong, healthy-looking plant. Plant the crown with the growing point at, or just below, the soil surface. On wetter soils, planting with the buds just raised out of the soil may help prevent rotting.

Protect brassicas from pigeons using cloches, netting or fleece. Pigeons are particularly keen on the leaves of brassicas (such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbages and cauliflower).

Deciduous hedges such as hawthorn, blackthorn, beech or hornbeam can be renovated during January when they are dormant and leafless. Where drastic renovation is necessary it is better to stage this gradually over two or three years.

Remove all remaining plant debris from the vegetable plot. Do not compost any diseased material such as blight-infected potatoes, onions suffering from white rot and any crops with rust. Burn or bin the diseased material.

Vegetables ready to harvest include parsnips, swede, sprouting broccoli, Brussels sprouts, leeks, celeriac, Jerusalem artichokes and turnips.

Plant gooseberries, blackcurrants and redcurrants but avoid planting in waterlogged, parched or frozen soil.

If you are holidaying this month, houseplants can be left for a week or two with no attention, but ensure that the temperature does not fall below the minimum they can tolerate. Move plants away from windows (where it can get cold) and water them before leaving so that the compost is moist but not waterlogged.

Provide a shallow dish or container of water at ground level in an open area of the garden. This will benefit other garden wildlife that needs to drink, as well as birds.

Viburnum davidii

With light-reflecting, corrugated dark green leaves on a compact plant, this evergreen shrub is ideal for planting in groups to give structure to the winter garden. White flowers are borne in clusters during late spring; they are followed by metallic-blue berries when both male and female plants are present. It usually achieves a height and spread of 3-5ft

Viburnums are a group of large-flowering shrubs, with some varieties reaching up to 20 feet. There are both evergreen and deciduous viburnum shrubs. Many have either white or pink blooms in early spring. Also commonly referred to as cranberry bush, viburnums are often used as ornamental fixtures in the home landscape. They are used in shrub borders or as hedges and screening. The larger varieties of viburnum shrub also make excellent focal points as specimen plantings.

There are several different types of viburnums.

One of the more well-known species is the old-fashioned Snowball viburnum (*V. opulus*) with beautiful, white snowball-shaped blooms. Notable viburnum types that are popular for their intoxicating fragrance include the Asian varieties, Cayuga and Burkwood. There are also viburnum shrubs that are commonly grown for their fall foliage or berries. Among the best foliage shrubs are Arrowwood and Linden arrowwood, both producing attractive purplish-red leaves.

The Tea viburnum is a deciduous species with blue-green foliage. Alleghany viburnum is dark green but occasionally turns purple in fall, remaining throughout winter. Types of viburnums with interesting berry color include those that change as they ripen from green to pink, yellow, or red to blue or black. For instance, Wayfaring tree and Blackhaw viburnums turn from red to black.



Where are all the berries?

Colourful berries on trees and shrubs are one of the pleasures of a winter garden gardeners are disappointed when trees or shrubs fail to produce berries on cue.

The causes can be environmental, poor cultivation, or just a failure to understand plant reproduction. For example, holly (Ilex) can be male or female plants, and both are needed to be within pollinating distance of each other for berries to be produced.

Similarly, female cultivars of the evergreen shrubs Skimmia and Aucuba will produce berries only if there is also a male nearby.

With other plants, such as Euonymus and Callicarpa, if a single plant is self-sterile (fails to set berries), another one planted nearby will ensure cross-pollination of the flowers (always required before berries can form).

Poorly nourished plants may lack the strong young growth needed to produce flowers and berries. A spring application of Growmore (100g/m sq) as a top dressing can help, as can potassium, key to ripening wood and encouraging berries. Apply sulphate of potash (15g/m sq) in early spring when growth begins.

Environmentally, berrying can be affected by frost damage to blossom in late spring. Drought or waterlogging can result in premature berry drop, even with successful pollination. Exposed, windy gardens and cold weather in spring deter insects from visiting plants in flower and shade may prevent sun-loving shrubs from flowering.

Aucuba are grown for their bold foliage, autumn fruit, and adaptability to shade, dry soil, pollution, and coastal conditions. A. japonica is a rounded, evergreen shrub with small, reddish purple flowers in spring, and red berries (on female plants) in fall. It grows to about 10 feet tall and wide.

'Crotonifolia' has leaves that look like they were speckled with yellow paint. 'Gold Dust' is female with heavy yellow speckling. 'Mr. Goldstrike' is male, more upright, and has gold-splashed leaves. Use as a hedge or specimen, in a container outdoors, or as an imposing Houseplant.



Noteworthy Characteristics:

Very adaptable; glossy, bold foliage; red berries on female plants. Many named cultivars are female and thus bear autumn fruit.

Types Of Euonymus – Choosing Different Euonymus Plants For Your Garden

The genus “Euonymus” includes 175 different euonymus plants, from dwarf shrubs to tall trees and vines. They are known as “spindle trees,” but each species also has its own common name. If you are selecting Euonymus plant varieties for your landscape, You’ll find different Euonymus shrubs that you might want to invite into your garden.



If you are looking for bushes, trees or climbers, euonymus has them all. Gardeners choose euonymus plant varieties for their attractive foliage and stunning autumn color.

Some also offer unique fruits and seed pods. Many euonymus shrubs come from Asia. You’ll find that they are available in a wide range of colors and sizes, and include both evergreen and deciduous types of euonymus. That gives you a good selection of different euonymus plants to choose from when you are looking for border plants, hedges, screens, ground cover or specimen plants.

Here are a few special types of euonymus to consider for your garden:

One popular euonymus shrub for USDA hardiness zones 4 through 8 is called ‘burning bush’ (Euonymus alatus ‘Fire Ball’). It grows to about 3 feet (.9 m.) high and wide, but accepts trimming, shaping and shearing. In the autumn, the long green leaves turn brilliant red. Another versatile member of the euonymus shrub family is called ‘green boxwood.’ Its dark green leaves are glossy and stay on the plant all year long. Easy maintenance, green boxwood accepts trimming and shaping.



Burning Bush

Euonymus japonicus
(Ornamental Spindle)



Gold Splash Wintercreeper (Euonymus)
Evergreen Shrub, Green and Yellow Foliage,

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: full sun partial shade full shade

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Wintercreeper Euonymus



Description:

A vigorous and hardy vine or spreading shrub featuring eye-catching gold variegated evergreen leaves, showy yellow fruit and orange seeds; a versatile and adaptable color accent for almost any garden application, most dramatic foliage occurs in full sun

Ornamental Features

Gold Splash Wintercreeper has attractive gold-variegated green foliage which emerges gold in spring. The glossy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter. It produces yellow capsules from mid to late fall. The flowers are not ornamentally significant.

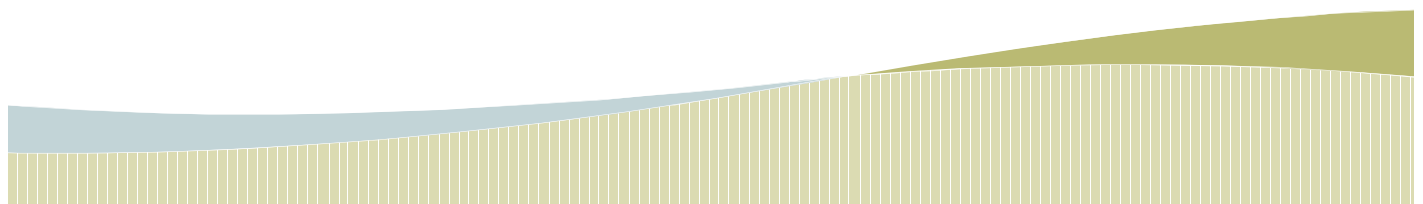
Landscape Attributes

Gold Splash Wintercreeper is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a ground-hugging habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage. This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and can be pruned at anytime. Gold Splash Wintercreeper is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Planting & Growing

Gold Splash Wintercreeper will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub performs well in both full sun and full shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.



How to Plant and Care for Lenten Roses

Everyone needs a winter-blooming flower (or two or three), and we are very partial to lenten roses.

Looking for Winter Blooms? Lenten Roses Are Perfect! If you have been scurrying around searching for winter-blooming perennial plants, why don't you buy yourself some Lenten Roses? Smack dab in the middle of winter, these great flowers will begin to open and the cool weather can help keep these blooms around for a couple of months.



Here's what to look for in a winter-blooming perennial Lenten Rose plant.

My first suggestion is for you to buy an already-established plant because these plants seem to take forever to get started, and there's just no need to put yourself through that frustration if you don't have to. Even if you do buy one that's large and already established, you will still have to give it a couple of years before it begins to flower.

They are great under trees like the Japanese Maple, which has low-spreading branches offering great shade for the roses. Make sure, however, that you plant them on the east side of your home (when possible) because the morning sun and the afternoon shade are the perfect environment for the Lenten Roses.

Also, make sure that you plant them in well-drained soil. Keep them away from soil that is wet continually, and also away from clay soil. Your Lenten Rose plant will reward you well if, in the spring, you place a few inches of compost (or mulch if you don't have any compost) at the base of the plant. The roots need to remain cool and moist and the compost should do the trick nicely.

If you want to increase the number of your plants, divide them in the late summer or very early fall. You will probably see blooms in the spring because the flower buds have already formed for the next year. When seedlings start popping up (and they will) remove them immediately or they will become invasive in a hurry.

You can expect them to bloom in colors ranging from light pink to a deep wine color, and some may even be speckled. The only way you'll be able to choose the colors of the bloom would be to purchase the plants from a nursery while they are blooming.



Tips for Successful Lenten Roses

pH should be about 7

The Lenten Rose plants are cold hardy in USDA zones 4-8

Expect your plant to grow about 18" tall and 18" wide.

If the evergreen leaves begin to look like they are dying, simply cut them off before the flower stalks begin to stretch.



How to Prune a Lenten Rose

1. Use clean, sharp shears to prune old, ratty foliage out of the Lenten rose plant in later winter and early spring, from late January through April. As bloom spikes emerge from the center of the plant, old fronds tend to droop unattractively outward. Cut all the tough, leathery aged vegetation back to young emerging growth at ground level to rejuvenate the lovely plant. This will expose the fresh young fronds and shy developing flowers. Lenten roses dislike overcrowding. Judicious pruning relieves the condition and helps prevent spring pests and diseases.
2. Clip Lenten rose blooms freely just as they begin to open to accent and enjoy fresh indoor winter arrangements throughout the flowering season. These beauties may last as long as two weeks as cut flowers.
3. Deadhead Lenten rose regularly throughout the flowering period, which lasts until May in some regions. Clip the flower stalks back to ground level when blooms fade and the seed pods within them swell and become evident. This will keep your plant looking tidy and prevent it from generously seeding the area.
4. Prune out unattractive, damaged or tattered fronds as they may occur throughout the year. Snip back stray or overly long stems to keep Lenten rose looking tidy.

Things You Will Need

Clean, sharp shears

Tip

Leave some spent blooms on the plants if you want them to reproduce.

Lenten rose reseeds itself prolifically.

It takes seedlings about two or three years to flower.

Warning

All parts of this plant are poisonous.

Wear gloves when you prune or handle it.



How to Transplant Helleborus

Ideally, transplant hellebores during their dormant period in fall. The popular variety lenten rose (*Helleborus orientalis*), hardy in USDA zones 4 through 9, adapts most readily to transplanting. Regardless of species, it may take two to three years for plants to fully recover after a move and start blooming with their previous abundance.



Relocation and Bed Preparation

Ideally, transplant hellebores at one or two years old. You can still transplant more mature, established hellebores, but success rate and recovery time will vary.

Hellebores thrive in light shade and moist, organically rich soil. Before transplanting, prepare the bed at the new location by mixing compost with the soil. Use a 2- to 3-inch-thick layer spread evenly over the bed, then dig it 12 inches deep into the soil. Adding the compost before transplanting hellebores provides the high amount organic matter these perennials enjoy.

There's no need to cut back hellebores before transplanting.

Digging and Transplanting

Use a shovel to dig out and lift the root ball from the soil. To get enough of the roots, look at the drip line -- the soil under the outer leaf tips -- and dig the root ball the same diameter.

Dig a hole at the new planting site the same depth and slightly wider than the root mass.

Set the hellebore in the hole -- adjust the soil level at the bottom until the point where the roots meet the stem sits level with the soil -- then fill in around the root ball. Use the same soil you just dug out to fill the hole.

Water and Mulching

Water right after transplanting. This settles the soil, minimizes transplant shock and helps the roots adapt quickly to the new environment. Water when the top of the soil feels dry through any remaining dry fall weather.

Mulch the bed to keep the soil moist after transplanting. The mulch layer also provides some cold protection over winter. Use 2 to 3 inches of compost spread evenly over the soil but leave 1 to 2 inches of space between the hellebore stalks and the compost. This helps minimize rot and insect problems.



Blue Birds

"The bluebird is well named, for he wears a coat of the purest, richest, and most gorgeous blue on back, wings, and tail; no North American bird better deserves the name, for no other flashes before our admiring eyes so much brilliant blue. It has been said that he carries on his back the blue of heaven and the rich brown of the freshly turned earth on his breast; but who has ever seen the bluest sky as blue as the bluebird's back?"



The eastern bluebird is a year-round resident in Virginia. Bluebirds are usually found in fields, open woodlands, parks or along golf courses or other open areas, including suburban locations with open spaces and scattered trees. The eastern bluebird has a musical flight call that often reveals its presence.

In The Backyard:

Bluebirds can be attracted to peanut butter mixes, suet and fruit. Raisins soaked in hot water to soften them are well received. The bluebird's special favorite is mealworms.

Nesting:

The eastern bluebird nests throughout Virginia in appropriate habitat. One, two or sometimes three broods may be produced. Three to five light blue eggs are typical.

If you manage a bluebird house watch for house sparrows trying to use the next box and immediately remove any house sparrow nesting material.

Once declining in population, these birds are finally beginning to make a comeback. It's interesting to note, these birds were once as common as the American Robin.

Numbers declined in part, from nest competition with House Sparrows and the European Starling, both introduced species. Loss of habitat is another factor.

Through the efforts of birding groups, public education, and your help, these birds will have a better chance at survival than they once had.



The Chinese Zodiac - 2018 Year of the Dog

According to the Chinese Zodiac, 2018 is the year of the Dog ?? and its characteristic word is ACTION! Chinese New Year in 2018 is on Friday, the 16th of February and ends on February 4, 2019.

In Chinese astrology each zodiac year (rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig) is not just associated with an animal sign, but also one of five elements: Gold (Metal), Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth...the year of 2018 meets element of Earth, so 2018 is a Earth Dog Year.

The Dog occupies the eleventh position in the chinese zodiac. You are a "Dog chinese zodiac animal" if you are born in one of these years: 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018.

The Chinese Horoscope 2018 predicts that this year of the Brown Earth Dog is going to be a good year in all respects, but it will also be an exhausting year. You will be happy, yet frustrated, rested, yet tired, cheerful, yet dull!

Planning, postponing and negligence are words you will need to remove from your vocabulary during this year.

Refreshed and regenerated, the Dog will accelerate the initiation of all things, but this will bring, in the same time, pressure and stress in the everyday life.

For those born in the year of the Dog, 2018 is a very good year regarding the financial aspects, but a little difficult from a health point of view. Actually, in the year of the dog, all zodiac signs will want to pay special attention to their health. Year 2018 is the ideal time to start eating healthy, doing sports and getting rid of bad habits.



About the Earth Dog

Those born in the Dog year are objective people, who will spread the sound of justice and of good advice. A constructive and efficient thinker, the Dog proceeds with difficulty, but with a very well-defined purpose.

The dog is devoted to his ideal, but he will comply with the rules set by the majority. Observant and cautious, the native will appreciate in a correct manner the value of money and power and will establish a value scale from which he will rarely deviate. Very secretive, friendly and calm, he will know how to assert himself in front of others and how to cleverly prepare himself.



From the Garden of Eva

A new year brings the chance to up your commitment to using seasonal ingredients in your cooking. If you're on a post-Christmas health kick, there are plenty of seasonal vegetables to keep you going: low in fat roasted butternut squash, carrots, cauliflower and parsnips made into nutritious soups and flavoursome sprouts creamed or sauteed. Not forgetting the fish and seafood: mussels, skate and salmon are at their best at this time of year. For the days where you need something with a little more substance (we all need a spot of comfort food when it's cold outside!), January's seasonal foods also include duck and lamb, roasted or stewed, and winter fruits in cakes and crumbles. So start the new year with some quality fare and start cooking with January's seasonal ingredients.

SPICED HAM HASH

SERVES 4 PREPARATION 15 mins plus chilling time

COOKING 15 mins

INGREDIENTS

(11oz) cooked ham, roughly chopped

1 onion, peeled and chopped

(6½ oz) cold roast potatoes, chopped

2 free-range eggs, beaten

2tbsp chopped chives

2tbsp chopped parsley

1½ tsp crushed dried chilli

Flour, for sprinkling

Vegetable oil, for cooking

Bunch watercress, to serve

Soda bread, toasted, to serve



METHOD

Put everything except the oil and the flour into a food processor and pulse. Season.

Shape the mixture into eight patties and dip each in a little flour.

Chill for at least 30 mins (or up to 12 hours)

Pour oil into a frying pan to a depth of about 5mm (¼in) and cook the patties (in batches if necessary) for about 5 mins on each side. Serve on toasted soda bread with watercress.

top tips

Chilling the cakes beforehand helps them stay together during cooking.



CRAB BRUSCHETTA

SERVES 2 PREPARATION 20 mins

INGREDIENTS

4 slices of Italian-style bread
1-2 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed
(6½ oz) cherry tomatoes, halved
½ tbsp grated lemon zest
2-3 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra for brushing
2 tsp balsamic vinegar
(8 oz) crab meat, fresh or tinned
A few torn basil leaves

METHOD

Brush the bread with a little olive oil and grill or toast until lightly golden and crisp. When toasted, rub each slice with some crushed garlic.

Combine the tomatoes, lemon zest, olive oil, balsamic vinegar and any remaining garlic and leave to marinate for ten minutes.

Stir through the crab meat and basil leaves. Season well, then spoon the tomato mixture over each slice of bread and serve immediately.

top tips

If you're using tinned crab, chill the tin and drain well before adding.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 c. fresh lime juice
1 c. silver tequila
1/2 c. orange liqueur
1 bottle champagne (about 3 cups)
lime wedges, for rim
salt, for rim

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a large pitcher and stir well.
Run lime wedges around the rim of each champagne flute and dip the rims in coarse salt.
Divide margaritas between flutes and garnish with lime wedges.



Champagne Margaritas

This margarita gets a festive boost with the addition of your favorite bubbly.

10 Uses for Your Dead Christmas Tree

1. Mulch...

Pine needles dry quickly and decompose slowly, making them an excellent moisture- and mold-free mulch for ground-covering crops, such as strawberries, to rest on.

2. Create a bird sanctuary...

Place your tree in its stand outdoors. Fill bird feeders and hang them from the boughs, or drape the tree with a swag of pinecones coated with peanut butter

3. Insulate Perennials...

Cut off boughs and lay them over perennial beds to protect them from snow and reduce frost heaving.

4. Edge Borders...

Cut the trunk into 2-inch discs and set them into the soil to edge flower beds or walkways.

5. Shelter Fish...

If you live near a lake or have a pond, and your tree's chemical-free, toss branches into the water to provide sheltering habitat for overwintering fish. (Get permission from town officials if needed.)

6. Set a stage for containers...

Saw the trunk into different lengths and use the pieces as flowerpot risers for a dramatic group display.

7. Make coasters and Trivets...

Cut thin slabs off the trunk, sand them smooth, and apply a thin coat of polyurethane to keep the sap off tables and glassware.

8. Chip it...

Rent a chipper (get a few neighbors together to split the cost) and feed the tree through it. Next spring, spread the wood chips under shrubs; they'll suppress weeds and, as they decompose, add nutrients to the soil.

9. Feed a fire pit...

It's fine to use a few of the quick-to-ignite branches to start an outdoor fire pit—but never in an indoor fireplace, where creosote build-up is a hazard.

10. Stake your plants...

Strip small branches and use the remaining twigs to support indoor potted plants or stake leggy seedlings.





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