



NEW WAY
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JANUARY 2011

The "bare-root" month

A Southern California gardener's task is never complete, even in the middle of Winter. While the cold-winter climate gardeners sip their hot chocolate and wear their bunny slippers, the folks around these parts grab their spade and dig in. There are many tasks this month that cannot be put off until February.

A few important jobs are pruning deciduous fruit trees, pruning roses, dormant spraying, and bare-root planting. Those gardeners on the coast can begin to feed their citrus trees this month (if you live in an inland valley, wait until March). By fertilizing your trees now, you'll promote more blossoms in February and thus enjoy a more abundant crop.

by Randy Newhard, Owner/CEO



NAKED PLANTS

January is sometimes called "the bare-root month" because of the wide selection of plants in bare-root form.

"Bare-root" describes a plant that has had all the soil removed from its roots before shipping. Only plants that go dormant in winter can be sold in this form.

In our region, the major plants sold this way are roses, cane berry bushes, deciduous fruit trees, ornamental deciduous trees and vines, strawberries and a few vegetables including artichokes, asparagus, horseradish, rhubarb, and short-day onions.

...are less expensive



GARDEN TIP

Protect your spring bulbs and annual flowers from being crushed by skunks.

Don't throw away the thorny canes you prune off climbing roses; bend them around the borders of your flowerbeds to make a low fence. Peg them in place with bent sections cut from coat hangers.

The canes will soon be hidden by foliage and flowers, but skunks won't cross the prickly obstacle.

...don't get skunked!



TURF CARE

Feed cool-season lawns (fescue/marathon, bluegrass, ryegrass). These grasses are growing well now and will need regular feeding with a high quality, slow release fertilizer.

Remember, cool-season lawns should be mowed about a half an inch lower in the winter than in the summer; however, along the immediate mild coast, warm-season lawns (bermudagrass, St. Augustine, zoysia) are pretty much sleeping.

...be mindful of water use - even with all of the rain



ARBOR CARE

This month's tree and shrub tasks are all about planting, pruning, and protecting. In San Diego County we can still plant trees of all kinds: fruit trees, shade trees, and flowering trees. Choosing them is fun now since nurseries tend to add their new selections in January.

While you shouldn't prune flowering trees until after they've bloomed, you can now prune most shrubs and deciduous shade trees.

Keep up with raking - fallen leaves can do heavy damage if left to smother grass.

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Summary

- Work in the Garden – Primary tasks include major pruning of dormant fruit and shade trees, vines and rose bushes.
- Planting and Transplanting – Plant dormant deciduous stone fruit trees, shade trees, grapes, berries, hardy perennials, roses, shrubs and Wisteria now through the spring. Water thoroughly but don't over water; cooler temperatures, shorter days and wet periods will decrease the need for watering.
- Bedding Plants – Refresh your cool season annuals with Calendulas, Cyclamen, Dianthus, Pansies, Iceland Poppies, Ranunculus, Snapdragons, Sweet Alyssum and Violas when available.
- Vegetables and Herbs – Clean and prepare beds by adding Planting Mix and Mulch and turning the soil over. Great time to plant strawberries.

- Lawns – Be sure you have adjusted your watering days and times. Your lawn should be receiving 30-40% less water during these cooler months.
- Pest Control – Deciduous woody plants, particularly fruit trees and roses, need spraying now with a dormant oil spray to avoid many spring insect and bacterial infestations. Repeat spraying 2-3 times before buds open. Bait or hand-pick snails. Pick up fallen leaves and spent flowers.
- Roses – After pruning the roses back, use a lime-sulphur spray to prevent diseases. Apply a 6-20-20 fertilizer to promote strong roots.



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