



Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

JAN/FEB 2009
Vol. 27 No. 1

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Berkeley, CA

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Jan/Feb Success Tips

- 1. Prune** roses and deciduous fruit and ornamental trees in January. Don't prune spring-blooming plants like flowering cherries and camellias—wait until they have finished blooming before pruning them.
- 2. Fruit trees and roses are here!** Choose from our large assortment of hand-picked plants selected for this climate.
- 3. Prevent crabgrass** from sprouting in you lawn by applying our special pre-emergent.
- 4. Remember your Valentine** on February 14! Our blooming plants and gift certificates make perfect gifts.
- 5. Pick up fallen camellia flowers** as well as spent blooms still on the plant, to help prevent camellia blight problems.



Have a Fruitful Year!

Every garden should have several fruit trees to provide superior tasting fruit and healthy snacking. Begin establishing your own orchard by adding one or two trees a year. If your yard is small, save space with our dwarf varieties or by planting three trees in a triangle with the trunks about two feet apart.

Our FRUIT TREES will arrive in mid January, ready for immediate planting. The choices are tremendous, including *pomegranates, Asian pears, cherry, apple, apricot, fig, nectarine, pear, peach, persimmon, and plum*—all at great prices!

SMALL FRUITS such as *strawberries* and *blueberries*, as well as *grapes* and *artichokes*, can be planted now as well.

Say "Hello Spring!" with Flowering Shrubs

It's so easy to plant colorful shrubs that come alive in late winter and early spring here in California! Here are some of our favorites:

Weigela. The small trumpet-shaped flowers, reminiscent of foxglove, bloom in colors ranging from pink to red to purple. The hardy plants thrive in any soil, and tolerate wind and some drought.

Coleonema (*Breath of Heaven*). The tiny pink or white flowers begin early and bloom over a very long time and the slender stems produce delicate bright green or yellow leaves.

Azaleas, camellias, Indian hawthorn, rockrose, ceanothus, and escallonia are other excellent early blooming shrubs. Check with us often, and select your favorite colors as the plants come into bud.

For *early blooming vines*, plant **wisteria, Carolina jessamine, and pink jasmine.** We have *winter/early spring flowering trees* too such as **magnolia** and **redbud 'Forest Pansy'**. Come in and select something beautiful for your yard!



Plant a Valentine Garden!

Want to give your loved one an unusual Valentine's Day gift they will enjoy February 14th and all through the year? Create a romantic garden niche! You can do it by yourself, or work together to make a special retreat for two.

First, select an area where you can add a trellis or hedge that will provide privacy. Include a bench built for two, and a water fountain to add a relaxing sound.

Include plants that please the senses, especially those that have appealing fragrances or textures.

Traditionally, pastel colors are more romantic, so consider flowering plants in pinks, white, light blues, and purples. Then, enjoy your romantic get-away for years to come!



Dormant Spray Tips

A properly applied dormant spray is an easy way to prevent a variety of pests and diseases (including peach leaf curl) from becoming problems in springtime.

FOR MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS, FOLLOW THESE TIPS.

Spray now, or before the tender buds begin to swell and open. Choose a time when it won't rain for at least a couple of hours. Don't spray any plants that are in bone-dry soil.

Walk around the plant as you spray to make a thorough application—otherwise pests will infest unprotected areas you've missed! Spray all plants without leaves, and check the label to see if you can use it on plants with leaves as well.

Use as strong a spray pressure as your equipment allows, thereby assuring deep penetration into cracks and crevices in the bark.

Stop by and ask us which sprays you need to use to protect your particular plants.



Landscaping with Roses

Shrub roses are a splendid way for novice and time-constrained gardeners to embark upon a rose growing adventure. Here's why these under-utilized roses are often an excellent choice—

✿ **REDUCED MAINTENANCE AND ABUNDANT RESULTS:** Many have a high ability to resist diseases which means zero spraying for you. Plus, they'll reward you with colorful displays of blossoms from summer through fall with only one pruning in January.

✿ **THEY KNOW HOW TO THRIVE** and will flourish in conditions that are not suitable for hybrid tea roses.

✿ **FRAGRANCE!** Many shrub roses will delight you with their perfumed aroma. Choose from a variety of appealing scents to find your favorite.

✿ **LANDSCAPING VERSATILITY:** Shrub roses range in size from low growing ground-covers to a height of 5 feet. Their natural shrub form is appealing, but you can also shape them into a hedge for boundaries and property dividers. Blend shrub roses into a mixed border of flowers, use them as an accent, or in mass groupings. *Superb!*



Help Cold-Damaged Plants

If a cold snap should hit and any plants are damaged, keep these tips in mind to encourage a rapid come-back:



1. Don't immediately remove dead material; it actually provides protection from additional freezing and sunburn.

2. Once warm weather has returned and the danger of frost has passed, watch for

new growth—when you see it, go ahead and remove the dead material.

3. Water requirements are reduced with lost foliage, so water sparingly.

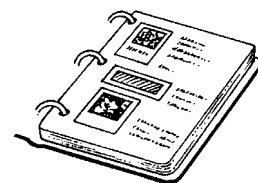
4. Wait until the plant is well-recovered with strong new growth, then fertilize.

Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream.

--Barbara Winkler

A New Year's Resolution: Garden Journaling!

Be it a simple notebook, computer spreadsheet, or observations recorded in the back of your *Sunset Western Garden Book*, your personal gardening journal is an invaluable reference resource for future planning. It's fun and educational to compare bloom and fruit harvest times year by year, and compare them to varying weather conditions. Plus, keeping a record of the garden



also helps with crop rotation. **HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES OF WHAT TO INCLUDE:**

1. Record names and varieties of trees and shrubs you planted. Were there any special instructions? Keep them here!
2. Write down planting dates for flowers and vegetables, location, blooming or harvesting dates, likes/dislikes, performance notes, and pest outbreaks.
3. Jot down your ideas for the future.
4. Did you try a new product? Record how you used it and assess how it worked.
5. Note any garden problems and how you solved them.
6. How about those weeds? Using the right preemergent at the right time can reduce or eliminate many weed problems. Mark treatment dates on your calendar.
7. Record specific details about your garden conditions. For example, note how light shifts throughout the year by plotting the path of the sun.

ADDED BENEFIT: Take photographs of your landscaping and store them with your journal for insurance purposes.

SUNNY CITRUS FRUIT SALAD

Brighten up a winter day with this refreshing fruit salad! Serves 4

1 ruby pink grapefruit
3 navel oranges—or a combination of oranges*
and tangerines



1/4 cup honey
2 T fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp ground cardamom

Slice off the ends of grapefruit and oranges. Remove peels. With a sharp knife, remove membranes from individual segments. Collect the segments and juice in a bowl.

Drain any excess juice from the fruit into a small saucepan. Add lemon juice, honey, and cardamom to the saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, then simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool to room temperature. Pour over citrus mixture and gently fold in so that all the fruit is coated. Let stand for 15 minutes, or chill until ready to serve. *Optional:* top with pine nuts, dried cranberries, or sliced kumquats.

Serve as a colorful side dish, add to a bed of lettuce, or as an ice cream topping.

*experiment with combining navel, valencia, and/or mandarin oranges with tangerines.

Garden Tool Tune-Ups

Want to protect a valuable investment? Now is an opportune time to prepare your shovels, hoes, rakes and trowels for another year of service. Sharpen your tools now so they will be ready once you get back to the joys of gardening. Remove caked-on soil with a file or steel wool. If dirty, handles and blades should be scrubbed with soap and water and allowed to dry thoroughly before storing. Those wood handles won't split or splinter if treated with a little linseed oil or other protector. Even better, sand them down and paint them with a bright, vibrant color—they'll be easier to spot in vegetation or in a relative or neighbor's garage.

