



Home Gardener's  
NEWSLETTER

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## Jan/Feb Success Tips

- 1. Yippee—Spring is just around the corner!** This is an important time for *pruning, dormant sprays, weed control, and planting.* But also *dream a little* about how you want your yard to be different this year, and then take the time to *begin planning* to create a more beautiful yard.
- Even in the winter, **some plants can be dry** because of long lulls between rains, or where eaves or other coverings shield plants—be sure to provide the water they need!
- Give one of our **blooming plants for Valentines Day** including *cyclamen, anemones, ranunculus, and primula malacoides!* Your sweet-heart will appreciate the long lasting and countless flowers much longer than a bouquet of cut flowers.
- 4. Prune** rose bushes and all deciduous fruit and shade trees, except plants that bloom in the spring. Before February 1st is a good time to prune pine trees.

## Shrubs & Trees for Bouquets

This winter *fill your home with colorful bouquets* created from shrubs and small trees that are budded and/or blooming now. Cutting the plants not only helps to shape them, but removing weight can help prevent branches from breaking.

Add some new blooming trees and shrubs to your garden now, and you'll have lots of graceful flower arrangements next winter, and for years to come.

### HERE ARE A FEW TO CHOOSE FROM:

The **camellia** is one of nature's best productions. Their flawlessly formed flowers, in shades of pink, red, and white, contrast perfectly with their shiny deep green leaves.

There are a large number of **magnolias** that produce a wide variety of blooms, from huge tulip-shaped to multiple-petaled flowers. Some start blooming in January.

**Other great early blooming plants** to choose from include *azalea, weigela, lilacs, ceanothus, viburnum, rhapsiolepis, redbud, and flowering plums, plus vines* including *wisteria, hardenbergia, Carolina jessamine* and *pink jasmynes.*



## Plant an Edible Landscape!

Here are some delicious, long lived food plants we have in stock now (while supplies last!) and ready for immediate planting.



Our new **blueberry** varieties are especially well adapted to our climate. Besides yielding abundant crops of delicious high anti-oxidant blueberries, these shrubs are attractive too.

Big, red and juicy **strawberries** top the list of favorite fruits. When picked fresh from your garden, the flavor of these gems is unsurpassed. Pair with rhubarb for tasty pies, top cakes and ice cream, or preserve as jam—yum!

Although **rhubarb** is a vegetable, it is most commonly used to make tart pies, sauces, and cobblers. Alone or with berries, it makes great jelly and jam. Always cook before serving. The leaves can make you sick, so be sure to discard them and use only the stalks.

**Other small fruits and vegetables** to plant now include *raspberries, blackberries, wine and table grapes, asparagus, and artichokes.*

You'll have great success with our top quality **fruit trees.** Choose from a variety of delicious *apple, apricot, cherry, pear, Asian pear, peach, nectarine, plum, citrus, avocado, persimmon, fig, pomegranate* and *fruiting mulberry.*



**BE SURE TO PICK UP** some of our *garden mulch* and mix it with *Kellogg's All Purpose 12-12-12* for optimum growth.

## Things You'll Be Glad You Did Before Spring

During the sleepy time of winter is the ideal time to stop weeds and pests before they can germinate, sprout, or hatch in your garden!

✓ **Preemergents**—will stop the most troublesome weeds like *purslane, chickweed, knotweed, crabgrass, and spurge* from germinating in your lawn from January to March. Also, use weed killers and/or preemergents in walkways and around plants now, before the weeds get larger. Come in and we'll prescribe the best products for your particular situations.

✓ **Weed Block Fabric with Mulch**—prevents weed growth while letting water and oxygen reach your desired plants.

✓ **Dormant Sprays**—prevent the overwintering of *mite* and *aphid* eggs, most *scales*, and other pests from hatching by applying before the tender buds begin to swell and open. Treat peach and nectarine trees for *peach leaf curl* too! We'll help you select the right spray for your particular plants, so be sure to ask!



**PLANT ROSES**—beautiful *queen of the flowers!* How they have improved since your grandmother's day! Today's varieties no longer require hours of tending because they have been *bred to be much more carefree and disease resistant.* Choose from our excellent selection of proven varieties for our area and new award-winners!

## Increasing California Oil Production

**A** California oil boom is well underway—with *superior quality olive oil*, that is! Growers in our fair state have been planting olive trees in "super high density" hedgerows. The trees are spaced 5 feet apart, and each row is 13 feet apart.

This planting method increases the number of trees planted on an acre to 675 instead of the traditional 120. They are typically kept topped at about 8-9 feet. Harvesting olive crops can begin after only two summers in the ground.

The real advantage of growing olive trees in this manner is that a crew of two can mechanically harvest an acre in about 45 minutes and press the olives into oil within 90 minutes. The traditional hand harvesting method takes an hour and a crew of 40 to cover an acre.



**Would You Believe . . .** we soon may learn better fertilizing techniques from leaf cutter ants? The rain forest foliage and soil are both nitrogen poor, and yet leaf cutter ant's fungus farms are nitrogen rich. Scientists recently discovered that a bacteria growing on the fungus actually pulls nitrogen from the air and fertilizes their fungal gardens!

## Graywater: Now Legal to Use!

**I**n August, a new state law passed allowing Californians to recycle our own water. "Graywater" comes from washing machines, bathtubs, and bathroom sinks. "Blackwater" comes from toilets and kitchen sinks and should never be recycled.

A basic system can be installed from a single source without a permit and is ideal to use on trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and flower gardens. "Complex" systems, which can recycle all of the graywater in a house, still require a permit. *Keep in mind that state law does not allow graywater to contact edibles or vegetables.*

**Benefits of recycling graywater include** reduced water bills, reduced energy use (25% of California's consumed electricity is used to pump and treat water), reduced ground water depletion, and reduced load on septic tanks.

Visit [www.bsc.ca.gov/apprvd\\_chngs](http://www.bsc.ca.gov/apprvd_chngs) to see the new law.



## LANDSCAPING Between HOUSES



**N**early every house has a neglected, narrow plot of land—often between two houses—that is in need of a landscaping update. **HERE ARE SOME SOLUTIONS FOR A MORE BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE.**

☼ Buildings bordering the area have greater impact on the amount of sun and shade than on most planting beds. Many areas between two houses are in shade for most of the day, with hot overhead sun for just a short time in the middle of the day. Experiment with different plants—many shade loving plants (impatiens for example) will flourish for short periods of time in midday sun.

☼ The configuration of surrounding structures can produce a "wind tunnel" effect. One strategy is to fill this area with low growing shrubs that offer year-round interest, such as plants with colorful foliage or berries. We have many to choose from!

☼ This area often suffers from watering problems—either too much or not enough water. Poor drainage design can saturate the soil from overflowing gutters and eaves, or from standing water. Eaves and overhangs may contribute to dry soil. Change drainage patterns as needed to correct poor drainage situations, and select plants that suit the available environment.

☼ The soil is apt to be in poor condition because the area is not regularly planted and rarely has been amended. The good news is that these smaller areas are easier and less expensive to remove old soil and add amendments.



## Delicious Beef Stew with Apples

*Plant more fruits and vegetables this year and enjoy this healthy recipe with ingredients from your own garden!*

1 lb beef top round, cut in 1" cubes	1 can beef broth
Salt and pepper to taste	1 medium potato, peeled & cubed
2 Tbsp flour	½ c carrots, sliced
2 Tbsp vegetable oil	2 tart apples, peeled, cored & sliced
1 medium onion, sliced	½ c peas

**D**redge the meat in a mixture of salt, pepper, and flour—then brown in heated oil. Add onion and cook until tender. Add broth. Heat to a boil, then reduce heat, cover and simmer until tender—about an hour. Add potato, carrots, and apples; cook about 15 minutes, or until tender. Stir in peas and cook until heated through.

## Prune and Stay Fit

**N**ormal yard work burns about 150 calories in 30 minutes. With the following small modification while trimming your hedges *you can double that and burn 300 calories, rev up your metabolism, and more effectively tone your biceps, triceps, pectorals, deltoids, and trapezius muscles.*

Simply hold the clippers in front of you at shoulder height (while keeping elbows bent). Elevating your arms gets your heart to beat faster in order to carry blood to your upper body. For shorter hedges, squatting while lifting your arms to shoulder level will *tone your gluteus maximus* (aka butt muscles) and *thighs* too! **Good bye arm jiggles!**

