

Planning for Spring Gardening in January

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The majority of perennial plants are dormant this month but that certainly does not mean gardeners should hibernate along with their plants. During the month of January, there is much that can be done to enhance a garden and lawn for the summer growing season.

Since most vegetation has been bitten back by Jack Frost, January is a great time to evaluate your garden areas where architectural structures are used to support spring and summer plant growth. Often arbors and trellises need seasonal maintenance such as extra bracing or replacing deteriorating wood.

Deciduous shrubs and trees, meaning trees or shrubs that lose their leaves seasonally, should be inspected and pruned this month. If you want to add shrubs, trees, and fruit vines, January is a good month to get these plants in the ground. When planting, make sure you follow a protocol provided by the Cooperative Extension Service, a local nursery/garden supplier, or your agricultural cooperative. Moreover, winter is a great time to fertilize your fruit trees before they bloom this spring.

New vegetable and flower beds can be dug, composted, or peat moss can be added to the soil in preparation for seeds and seedlings for this coming spring. While fall is the ideal time to establish or renovate fescue lawns, early spring provides the second best option. Therefore, the first couple of months of the New Year serve as good planning and prep months for lawn renovation. Prerequisites for a successful lawn include soil testing and adding soil amendments. These actions should be taking place now.

Another thing to remember is spring seed, preemergence herbicides, and fertilizers are hitting the doors of our local suppliers, so for the best selection, shop early. Then when spring does arrive, you will be ready with product in hand.

When it comes to gardening, you can't over-estimate the need to plan and prepare. Many potential problems can be resolved by planning and preparing in January. Therefore, make your list, sharpen your gardening tools, purchase your supplies, put on your jackets, and let the gardening begin.