

Monthly Check-list of Things to do in the Garden

This list has been compiled from a number of different sources. We continue to refine and adapt the suggestions to reflect the realities of gardening in the Nanoose Bay area. "The New Twelve Month Gardener", Whitecap Books.

February

There is nothing on this list that can't wait another month if you are going on holiday or not in the mood for gardening.

Annuals, perennials & bulbs

- Lift, divide & replant late blooming perennials. (Pot up any extra plants for our Plant Sale.)
- Cut old leaves from hellebores before new ones unfurl.
- Check stored bulbs & tubers and discard any that are diseased.
- Start geranium cuttings.
- Sow sweet peas, bachelor buttons & California poppies where they are to bloom.
- Plant tuberous begonias indoors once they have sprouted.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Spray susceptible ornamentals, fruit trees and roses with dormant oil and lime sulphur to control over-wintering insects or diseases. Choose a dry, windless day.
- Remove cankered limbs from fruit and nut trees for control of diseases such as apple anthracnose and bacterial canker. Remember to sterilize tools before each cut.
- Prune lateral & side branches of wisteria back to within 2 to 3 buds from the main stem.
- Remove dead flower heads from hydrangeas and shorten stems to a pair of healthy buds.
- Fertilize rhodos if needed. (www.rhododendron.org/fertilizing.htm)
- Rugosa roses could be pruned now.
- Prune Clematis from Groups 2 & 3 (B & C) http://rainyside.com/archives/clematis_care

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Seeds of artichoke, asparagus, fennel, leeks, sweet onions and oriental greens may be started indoors.

Other garden activities

- Bait for slugs & snails around emerging perennials.
- Start now to pull all weeds before they go to seed – you'll notice fewer weeds over time.
- Ensure plants & containers under shelter do not dry out.
- Apply dolomite lime to lawns in February or March.

March

Annuals, perennials and bulbs

- Mulch flower beds with compost or fish compost.
- Lift and divide perennials; plant new ones.
- Cut down ornamental grasses.
- Cut old fronds off evergreen ferns.
- Deadhead and feed spring bulbs as they finish flowering.
- Transplant snowdrops while in bloom.
- Pot tuberous begonias in well-drained potting soil.
- Remove last year's leaves from hellebores and discard any that appear diseased.
- Plant pansies, snapdragons and calendulas.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Plant and transplant trees and shrubs.
- Prune early-blooming deciduous shrubs after flowering.
- Spray dormant oil and lime sulphur. (See article to right.)
- Apply fertilizer to rhodos before blooming.
- Prune hybrid tea and floribunda roses after March 15th and then apply a handful of organic rose food to soil.
- Sprinkle up to 1/4 cup magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts) under roses from base to drip line after pruning.
- Prune lavender.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Complete pruning of tree and bush fruits by March 31st.
- Train berry bushes to wire or fence supports with string.
- Plant new strawberry plants; feed established ones.
- Feed rhubarb well with rich organic material.
- Begin to sow radish, garlic and broad bean seeds.
- Begin successive sowings of peas, spinach, leaf lettuce, Chinese vegetables, onion sets, turnips and shallots after March 15th.
- Plant tomato seeds indoors.
- Sow seed of annual herbs.

General garden activities

- Seed or sod new lawns; repair existing ones.
- Edge lawn; begin mowing when grass is 3 inches high.
- Aerate lawn and apply dolomite lime if not done already.
- Remove winter mulches and compost them.
- Eliminate slugs and snails..
- Take soil samples for testing.
- Weed thoroughly so that the cycle of weed seed production will eventually be broken.

April

Annuals, perennials and bulbs

- Continue to weed and mulch flower beds.
- Deadhead daffodils when blossoms fade.
- Remove pods from bulbs you do not want to self seed.
- Feed bulbs with fish fertilizer as they finish flowering.
- Leave foliage on bulbs until it starts to yellow.
- Remove Common Bluebell leaves anytime.
- Relocate snowdrops (Galanthus) while they are in bloom.
- Plant summer bulbs such as Easter Lilies. (See Page 3)
- Trim dead leaves from ornamental grasses.
- Continue to sow hardy annual seeds directly in garden.
- Divide primulas and polyanthus after flowering.
- Fertilize perennials.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Finish pruning roses in early April. Fertilize.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs after the blooms fade.
- Shear winter-flowering heathers after flowering.
- Prune conifers.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Transplant strawberries and raspberries.
- Continue successive sowings of peas, spinach, Chinese vegetables, leaf lettuce, onion sets, turnips and shallots.
- Sow beets, carrots, Swiss chard, broccoli, cauliflower, parsnip and kale from April 16th to 30th.
- Sow zucchini, cucumbers and tomatoes indoors in a sunny window or cold frame.
- Plant early potatoes such as Yukon Gold and Pontiac.

General garden activities

- Continue to bait the garden and flower beds for slugs.
- Rake, top dress, seed and/or aerate the lawn.
- Apply dolomite lime if you have not already done so.
- Wait two weeks after liming the lawn to fertilize.
- Edge lawn; begin mowing when grass is 3 inches high.

May

Annuals, perennials & bulbs

- Plant out summer bedding plants after the middle of the month, weather permitting.
- Plant up tubs, baskets and window boxes.
- Pull up spring bedding plants.
- Sow seeds of biennial bedding plants for next year.
- Pinch out growing tips of chrysanthemums, asters and fuchsias to promote bushy growth.
- Spread a little lime or wood ashes around delphiniums and peonies.
- Stake tall perennials.
- Plant out dahlia tubers and gladioli bulbs, making sure to drive in the stakes first.
- Weed perennial beds with special care to avoid pulling up precious self-sown seedlings.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Check for aphids on roses and either rub them off or apply an insecticidal soap.
- Mulch around roses and rhodos if not already done.
- Train or tie in young shoots of climbers to cover the desired space evenly.
- Prune deciduous shrubs after flowering. Currant and forsythia can be cut back by as much as one third.
- Trim winter-flowering heathers with shears.
- Wait until you see new growth to prune lavenders.
- Remove faded trusses from rhododendrons and azaleas and apply fertilizer if necessary.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Continue successive sowings of lettuce, carrots, spinach, radishes, bush beans, pole beans, and potatoes.
- Start winter crops of cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbages and pumpkins.
- Start main crop of potatoes.
- Plant asparagus.
- Plant tomatoes after the middle of the month.
- Plant out peppers, eggplants and squash.
- Sow corn, cucumber and squash at the end of the month. Plant corn in blocks for better pollination.
- Keep vegetable garden well weeded and watch for signs of pests and diseases.
- Cut off strawberry runners.
- Take cuttings of sage, rosemary and thyme.

Other garden activities

- Keep newly turfed or sown lawns well watered.
- Continue preparing new lawns and repairing worn patches on existing ones.
- Monthly Check-list of Things to do in the Garden

June

Annuals, perennials & bulbs

- Continue planting bedding plants. Feed them regularly with organic fertilizer and water well.
- Keep watering bulbs until the leaves have turned yellow, and can be pulled off easily.
- Stake tall-growing perennials.
- Keep garden beds tidy by cutting off fading flowers.
- Divide German bearded irises after flowering.
- Sow perennials such as phlox, yarrow, columbine, lupine and delphinium in a seed bed for next summer.
- Mulch lilies with compost or well-rotted manure.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Prune back deciduous shrubs, such as mock orange and California lilac after flowering.
- Start taking shrub cuttings.
- Cut back suckers and faded flowers on lilacs.
- Deadhead rhododendrons and azaleas and refresh mulch if necessary.
- Keep newly planted hedges, trees and shrubs well watered.
- Check for aphids, mildew and black spot on roses and pick off and destroy diseased leaves.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Remove about one-third of the immature apples to get bigger fruit and prevent branches breaking from too much weight later on.
- Plant out tomatoes, zucchini and cucumbers.
- Thin out earlier sowings and continue to sow lettuce, carrots, spinach and radishes.
- Keep vegetable garden well weeded and watch for signs of pests and diseases.
- Continue to nip out side shoots of single-stemmed varieties of tomatoes, and support with stakes.
- Continue sowing winter vegetables. Start rutabagas and late cole crops.
- Cut off chive flowers to encourage new foliage.

Other garden activities

- Ensure containers and hanging baskets are kept watered.
- Finish all pool planting.
- Mow lawn regularly, keeping it at least 2 inches high.
- Turn compost.
- Maintain a regular check for disease and insect problems.
- Feed house plants and move outside into a shady spot for their annual summer holiday

July

Annuals, perennials & bulbs

- Water flowers in containers and hanging baskets daily or even twice daily.
- Deadhead annuals and perennials to encourage continued flowering and prevent self-seeding.
- Collect seeds of plants you want to propagate.
- Make sure tall plants have support – *before* they start to fall over.
- Lift irises after flowering, divide and replant.
- Pinch back mums and asters to promote bushiness.
- Plant fall bulbs such as autumn crocus.
- Take geranium (*Pelargonium* spp.) cuttings.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Prune deciduous shrubs after blossoms fade.
- Prune hedges lightly if necessary to keep them tidy.
- Rose suckers from the roots or from the stem below the graft should be removed as far back as possible.
- Deadhead roses and rhodos and water well.
- Feed roses with rose food; stop feeding rhodos.
- Take shrub cuttings.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Harvest vegetables and continue sowing lettuce, peas, kale, leeks, Swiss chard, broad beans, bush beans, beets, carrots and green onions.
- Sow winter vegetables such as winter cauliflower and purple sprouting broccoli until August 15th.
- Cut garlic scapes after one or two loops.
- Continue feeding and watering vegetables.
- Stop cutting rhubarb now, so that the plant can store energy. Keep it well watered.
- Remove unwanted strawberry runners and throw out plants that have cropped for three summers.
- Harvest bush fruits and cut out fruited canes.
- Cut herbs for freezing and drying.
- Harvest berries regularly before the birds get them.
- Clean up fallen fruits under trees.
- Check fruit trees for water sprouts (branches growing straight up from limbs) and remove.

Other garden activities

- Mow lawn regularly and keep edges trimmed.
- Keep compost moist and turned regularly.
- Keep garden well watered.
- Keep bird feeders and baths clean.
- Monthly Check-list of Things to do in the Garden

August – same as in July plus the following –

Annuals, perennials and bulbs

- Plant out perennial and biennial seedlings.
- Take cuttings of alpines, such as Dianthus.
- Continue taking cuttings of garden geraniums.
- Dry suitable flowers for winter decoration.
- Order peonies from catalogues to plant before winter.
- Select and order dahlias for planting next spring.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Take cuttings. Try Flowering Currant, Mock Orange, Potentilla, Forsythia, Hypericum, Lavatera, Caryopteris, Abelia, Sage, Hebe and Lavender.
- Finish pruning rambler roses.
- Clip lavender as flowers fade.
- Monitor for the possible presence of tent caterpillars.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Treat yourself to some new potatoes. Carefully loosen the soil under your plants to find a few small potatoes to harvest.
- Keep sowing lettuce, spinach, radishes, turnips and Chinese vegetables up to August 15th.
- Cut raspberry canes that have finished fruiting to ground level, and tie new canes to supports.
- Continue to collect herbs for freezing and drying, and take cuttings of rosemary, lavender, oregano, rue and bay laurel.
- Summer prune espaliered fruit trees
- Remove the tops of single-stemmed tomato plants (not bush types) at the fourth truss and fertilize.

September

Annuals, perennials & bulbs

- Keep deadheading annuals and perennials and collect seeds of those you wish to propagate.
- Divide early blooming perennials such as daylilies and iris. Pot up left-over plants for our 2012 Plant Sale.
- Plant peonies this month and next.
- When leaves of gladiolas turn brown, the corms can be lifted, sun-dried and stored in a cool, well-ventilated, frost-free place.
- Plant sweet peas, poppies and cornflowers now for early-summer flowering.
- Plant out wall flowers and add lime to soil.
- Begin planting spring-flowering bulbs.
- Dry flowers, including hydrangeas, for winter arrangements.
- Continue taking geranium (*Pelargonium* spp.) cuttings, as well as fuchsia, heliotrope and marguerite cuttings.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Order new roses and prepare new rose beds for planting in November.
- Prune summer-flowering heathers after blooming.
- Give hedges a final light trim.
- Continue taking shrub cuttings.
- Water trees and shrubs so they enter dormancy well-hydrated.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Continue harvesting fruits and vegetables.
- Cover tomato plants immediately if not already protected against late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*).
- Pull up tomato plants by the end of the month. Unripened tomatoes will ripen indoors.
- Continue sowing winter vegetables; lettuce, spinach, Swiss chard and kale, and thin out earlier sowings.
- Start taking cuttings of bush fruits.
- Plant fall rye as a cover crop in harvested areas of your vegetable garden.
- Prune old raspberry and blackberry canes – with the exception of everlasting berries.
- Order new fruit trees and bushes to plant in winter. Prepare sites by digging in compost and manure.

Other garden activities

- Sow grass seed to either repair and overseed old lawns or plant new.
Apply fall and winter fertilizer.
- Place black netting over ponds to prevent leaves falling into the water.
- Monthly Check-list of Things to do in the Garden

October

Annuals, perennials & bulbs

- Keep deadheading annuals and perennials and collect seeds of those you wish to propagate.
- Pull out annuals by the end of the month.
- Clean, weed and mulch flower beds.
- Divide early blooming perennials such as daylilies and iris. Pot up left-over plants for our 2012 Plant Sale.
- Plant peonies.
- Dig up dahlias, gladioli and tuberous begonias; label and store in a cool, well-ventilated, frost-free place.
- Continue planting spring-flowering bulbs.
- Plant lily bulbs from now until March.
- Continue taking geranium (*Pelargonium* spp.) cuttings, as well as fuchsia, heliotrope and marguerite.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Put sticky bands of Tanglefoot around tree trunks to trap winter moths.
- Order new roses and prepare new rose beds for planting in November.
- Collect and destroy old leaves of roses.
- Prune ramblers, cutting old flowering stems down to ground level.
- Prune summer-flowering heathers after blooming.
- Give hedges a final light trim.
- Prepare soil for planting trees and shrubs in winter.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Plant garlic, shallots and overwintering onions.
- Make a final sowing of lettuce in beds or cold frame.
- Keep harvesting fruits and vegetables.
- Continue taking cuttings of bush fruits.
- Take cuttings of herbs such as lavender, rosemary and bay laurel to keep indoors for winter.
- Divide clumps of chives and pot up young plants of mint, chives and parsley for indoor use.
- Order new fruit trees and bushes to plant in winter.
Prepare sites by digging in compost and manure.

Other garden activities

- Plant new lawns with seed or sod.
- Aerate lawn and apply fall and winter fertilizer.
- Place black netting over ponds to prevent leaves falling into the water.

November

Annuals, perennials & bulbs

- Continue to clean, weed and mulch beds.
- Complete bulb planting. Plant lily bulbs until March.
- Prevent rotting by ensuring cushion plants don't get smothered by leaves.
- Dig up dahlias, gladioli and tuberous begonias; label and store in a cool, well-ventilated, frost-free place.
- Cut back chrysanthemums when they have finished flowering.
- Pot up geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.) and fuchsias and store in a frost-free place. Water monthly.
- Continue sowing hardy annuals such as poppies and cornflowers and biennials such as foxgloves.

Trees, shrubs and climbers

- Put sticky bands of Tanglefoot™ around tree trunks to trap winter moths.
- Plant bare-root roses.
- Collect and destroy old leaves of roses.
- Give roses a final deadheading and a light pruning. Apply some dolomite lime around established roses.
- Prune summer-flowering heathers after blooming.
- Prepare soil for planting trees and shrubs in winter.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs

- Plant new berry bushes and fruit trees.
- Plant garlic, shallots, overwintering onions.
- Continue taking cuttings of bush fruits and prune out crossed and crowded branches.
- Divide clumps of chives and pot up young plants of mint, chives and parsley for indoor use.

Other garden activities

- Keep raking leaves.
- Keep aerating established lawns.
- Sharpen and oil tools before storing for winter.
- Service lawn mower.
- This is a good time of year to have your soil tested.
- Spread dolomite lime around lime-lovers such as lilac and over vegetable garden (except potato patch).
- Plan next year's vegetable garden.
- Send away for seed and plant catalogues.
- Plant new lawns with seed or sod.
- Aerate lawn and apply fall and winter fertilizer.
- Monthly Check-list of Things to do in the Garden

December & January

- **Annuals, perennials & bulbs**
- Protect crowns of tender plants on frosty nights.
- Divide and replant perennials..
- Firm down plants whose roots are loosened by frost.
- Start ordering flower seeds and plan flower garden.
- Check stored dahlia and begonia tubers and gladiola corms and remove those infected or diseased.
- Order summer bulbs for spring planting.
- Plant lily bulbs in well-drained soil if weather permits.

- **Trees, shrubs and climbers**
- Trees and shrubs may be planted if weather permits.
- Lightly prune hollies and evergreens to use clippings for wreaths and seasonal decorations.
- Continue to plant roses if ground is not frozen or waterlogged.
- Rake up and destroy old rose leaves to prevent overwintering of diseases.
- Pick off any diseased leaves remaining on rose plants.
- After a snowfall, carefully shake snow from evergreens to lessen the chance of branches breaking.
- Ensure that stakes and ties are secure but not too tight on climbers and trees.
- On a mild day in January, cut a few branches of early-flowering shrubs, such as forsythia, Chinese witch hazel or camellia for forcing indoors.
- Beginning in January, spray deciduous trees and shrubs with dormant oil and lime sulphur to kill over-wintering eggs of insect pests and fungal spores of plant diseases.

- **Fruits, vegetables and herbs**
- Plant fruit trees and bushes in good weather.
- Mulch herb bushes if weather turns severe.
- Plan vegetable garden and start ordering seeds.
- Begin spraying fruit trees with dormant oil and lime sulphur in mild weather.
- Prune fruit trees and bushes towards the end of January.
- Start lettuce and early greens in a cold frame towards the end of January.

- **Other garden activities**
- Rake leaves and debris off lawns and avoid walking on frozen grass.
- Clean and sharpen tools and service the mower and any other power equipment.