



# Lawn Care Newsletter

Lawn Care and Garden ~ News You Can Use

December 2007

## December Gardening Strategies

December is more than a time for mistletoe and Christmas trees and snowmen. It's the time to get ready for not only the holidays, but also months of harsh weather that can cause havoc on cars, people, and pets. In order to prepare for the worst winter brings, try these following tips to maintain safety and have fun at the same time.

- Take care of gardening supplies that have accrued during the year. Properly store tools, garden and lawn care products and lawnmowers and weed-whackers in the garage or tools sheds. Mulch flowerbeds and plants with 4 to 5 inches of straw or hay, or that pile of fall leaves that you haven't quite gotten around to bagging yet. Give the lawn one last rake and tidy up before snow falls.
- If you're lucky enough to have pinecones in your yard, save them for holiday decorations. As a matter of fact, trim small branches off pine trees to make homemade wreaths for your home and gifts to give. Winterberries and holly branches make great holiday table centerpieces.
- Get your home ready for the Christmas tree, and decorate your home and yard with holiday cheer. String lights inside and out! When stringing lights on trees and shrubs, make sure connections are wrapped in electrical tape and covered with plastic to protect from moisture and rain.
- Before snow falls, head to the garden supply center and purchase some salt to melt snow and provide solid footing for family and visitors, but protect plants and lawn from salt, as it may cause damage.
- To help protect plants, shrubs and trees, don't allow snow to accumulate around roots and on shrub branches. Take a broom and push snow away. After all, you wouldn't want to be left standing in snow all winter long, either!
- Enjoy the holidays!



### Did You Know?

No animal, once frozen solid (i.e., water solidifies and turns to ice) survives when thawed, because the ice crystals formed inside cells would break open the cell membranes. However there are certain frogs that can survive the experience of being frozen. These frogs make special proteins which prevent the formation of ice (or at least keep the crystals from becoming very large); so that they actually never freeze even though their body temperature is below zero Celsius. The water in them remains liquid: a phenomenon known as 'supercooling.' If you disturb one of these frogs (just touching them even), the water in them quickly freezes solid and they die.

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## Winter Landscape Ideas

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Fall has passed, the leaves are down, the trees are bare and the lawn is brown. Is there anything you can do to spiff up the yard for winter or care for your trees and shrubs and grass to make sure everything will survive another winter and grow green again come spring? You bet!

Protecting existing plants should be a first priority for winterizing any landscape. Before first snows fall, prepare dirt for spring planting of petunias and snapdragons by laying down a layer of fertilizer and straw mulch. Some hardy stock plants and shrubs can be planted as early as February. Planting bulbs in mid to late fall will ensure some brilliant color just when you were getting tired of gray trees, white snow and brown lawns, but make sure you plant them deeply enough to escape deep freeze conditions.

Fertilize around fruit trees and grape vines in late winter for superior fruit in spring and summer and prune trees and shrubs as well, when plants are dormant. However, if you find that your plants or trees show some signs of frost damage during the long winter months, resist the temptation of pruning or transplanting until warmer weather. Doing so can irreparably damage or even kill the plant.

Some of the best shrubs for winter landscaping beauty and color are Bayberry, Winterberry Holly and Christmas Holly shrubs. In addition, birch trees provide eye-catching beauty during every month of the year, and are especially hardy, especially in the northeast portions of the United States and Canada. Evergreen holly varieties provide beautiful, deep green foliage and colorful berries that invite smiles and are great for holiday decorations

Dogwood trees are also a nice choice for attracting interest in winter design and landscaping and many varieties of this tree offer bark in colors that range from red to a deep-wine color. Dogwoods provide fantastic backdrops for snowdrifts and yards that see a few inches to a few feet of snow every winter, and are relatively maintenance free most of the year. Of course, what would any winter landscape be without a cranberry bush that offers a haven for a variety of birds that can gorge on such tasty red berries during long, cold months, as well as providing bursts of color with their foliage, which offer red to purple awe-inspiring focal points in any yard, providing a nice change from the typical whites, grays and browns of winter.

Winter landscapes provide interest, beauty and safe and welcoming harbors for a multitude of wildlife throughout snow-filled months. Most winter plants are low on maintenance and care while high in beauty, making them an easy choice for many homeowners. Ideas are only limited by imagination. Visit a garden center or nursery near you to discover the wealth of winter plants and shrubs that will convert your winter landscape into a bird-attracting, colorful display of hues that will provide months of viewing pleasure and turn drab into delightful.

## Helpful Hints For December

- Check any plants recently planted; provide adequate moisture for new roots.
- If frost has heaved them up, gently press back into soil.
- Mulch with leaves or evergreen boughs after ground freezes; usually after the new year.
- If your soil is too acidic, add lime. Because it moves slowly through the soil, it will reach your plants' roots when they need it in early spring.
- After heavy snowfalls or ice storms, avoid tampering with plants—let 'mother nature' remove snow and ice.
- Check young trees and shrubs for bark nibbled off by hungry rodents. Wrap trunks to protect them from further damage.

## Great Gardening Web Sites

### Cold Climate Gardening

<http://www.coldclimategardening.com/>

Hardy plants for hardy souls

### Garden Games

<http://www.gardengames.co.uk/>

Manufacturers and retailers of games for the garden, from Chess to Croquet.

### Doctor Greenfingers

<http://www.doctorgreenfingers.co.uk/>

Quite a different site with help and advice "clinic" for sick plants and amateur gardeners- much gardening information as well as information to help you diagnose garden problems. Will try and help with gardener's questions.

## Whip Up Something From The Garden

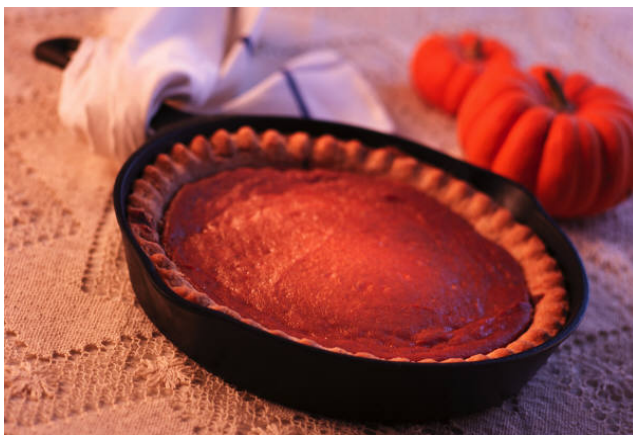
### SWEET POTATO PIE

#### INGREDIENTS

1 (1 pound) sweet potato  
1/2 cup butter, softened  
1 cup white sugar  
1/2 cup milk  
2 eggs  
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 (9 inch) unbaked pie crust

#### DIRECTIONS

Boil sweet potato whole in skin for 40 to 50 minutes, or until done. Run cold water over the sweet potato, and remove the skin.



Break apart sweet potato in a bowl. Add butter, and mix well with mixer. Stir in sugar, milk, eggs, nutmeg, cinnamon and vanilla. Beat on medium speed until mixture is smooth. Pour filling into an unbaked pie crust.

Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 55 to 60 minutes, or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Pie will puff up like a soufflé, and then will sink down as it cools.

## Do Your Part To Live Green ~ Holiday Edition!!

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Either recycle wrapping paper or better yet, why do gifts NEED to be wrapped?

Recycling fresh trees after Christmas can make a huge difference in reducing holiday waste. Instead of taking up space in the landfill, trees can be ground into wood chips, which can be used to mulch gardens or parks.

Buy a potted or balled Christmas tree (roots still attached) so you can replant it in the backyard or donate it to the parks department.



We hope you enjoyed our newsletter this month. If you have any suggestions for our newsletter, if you'd like to contribute your favorite recipe or if you'd like to contact us just for the heck of it you can always reach us at:

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Your Address  
Address 2  
City, State, Zip  
Phone Number  
Email Address  
Website

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Your Company Name  
Your Address  
Address 2  
City, State, Zip

Customer's Name  
Address  
Address 2  
City, State, Zip

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