

Directors Corner
by
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Landscaping and Gardening Tips

In 2014, there may be lulls in the day when you find yourself dreaming of a mature home orchard, beds filled with bright vegetables colors, fragrant herbs and eye busting berries. If so, remember to take advantage of these mild spells and check on indoor and outdoor plants with the following suggestions.

Plan a visit to some of our local nurseries where you can observe trees and shrubs. Some have quite lovely shapes, handsome and distinct features and colors that may enhance your landscape. For those who love to propagate, now is the time to take hardwood cuttings of forsythia, spirea, Japanese quince, wisteria, mock-orange, trumpet-vine and viburnum. Yews, junipers, holly, boxwood, broad-leaf evergreens, and many deciduous trees and shrubs can be propagated too. Insert evergreen cuttings in vermiculite or sand in a cool greenhouse.

On mild days, remember to water window boxes or other outside containers planted with evergreens. Remember to mulch azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias and laurel. They prefer acidic materials, such as oak leaves and pine needles, but any mixed, dry leaves or pine bark mulch will do.

If ice storm damages your trees still remain, prune the broken branches. If left alone, the wood fiber may not grow back and the branch will die.

How energy efficient is your landscape? Do you have evergreen trees or shrubs blocking a window where the sun's warmth would normally enter? Consider replacing them with deciduous plants that would let sun in during winter, but cast cooling shade in summer.

Check stored fruits and vegetables such as potatoes and apples for bad spots that may lead to decay. Remove and use those that show signs of spoiling. Separate others into slotted trays or bins to increase air circulation and reduce decay possibilities.

Hopefully you added gardening to your to do list this year. As the season progresses take notes of which varieties of flowers and vegetables do best and which do poorly in your garden.

Happy Landscaping and Gardening!!!