

December's Garden Tasks

As I was walking back from the mailbox with my new seed catalog cradled in my arm, a flash of yellow caught my eye. Could it be? Yes! It was a dandelion brazenly blooming in my front yard! I guess this year I need to add one more item to my December tasks for the garden – continue to weed.....even after the first snow falls!



The rest of my list includes:

1. Bring clay pots and statues made of cement, clay and some resins indoors. If items are too heavy to move, cover them with a tarp or plastic to keep them dry over winter. Repeated freezing and thawing could crack these garden objects.
2. Stock up on sand or kitty litter to cope with icy paths.
3. Protect shrubs planted under your roofline from snow damage. You might want to consider transplanting them in the spring to a location away from the roofline.
4. Check for mole tunnels and fill them with soil before the ground freezes.
5. Continue starting paper whites every few weeks for nonstop indoor bloom.
6. Start seeds of biennial flowers that you want to treat as annuals.
7. Water houseplants thoroughly, but not too frequently.
8. Treat your houseplants to pebble trays.
9. Mulch strawberries to insulate them from cycles of freezing and thawing.
10. Water evergreens, especially newly planted ones, when the ground is not frozen.
11. Continue starting paperwhites every few weeks for nonstop indoor bloom.

Do you remember that 15 minutes a day gardening tip from garden bloggers Tenth Acre Farm? In their December chore list, they state that we are less inclined to go outside at this time of the year. Which is too bad, because the fresh air and a few minutes of movement really benefit our health. Outside of that, spending just a few minutes tidying up now can mean the difference between “fun” and “over-whelming” when we begin preparing the spring garden.

Another of my favorite garden bloggers, Margaret Roach, states, “The shortest to-do list of the year, December’s, begins with the annual fire drill – one final last-minute check of whatever I had forgotten to secure outdoors, before entering my own semi-dormancy and holing up with seed catalogs and a pile of cookbooks, and making lots of soup while I watch the birds.”

The outdoor lights aren’t up yet at the Mahaffey’s and indoor decorations are in the staging area in the basement. My cat has been looking at the boxes with great anticipation. She loves the Christmas tree and so far, has just admired it and not tried to climb it.

Have you started your “wish” list for Santa? Even if you have been a little naughty, go ahead and make a list!