Gardening Tasks for January

We say it every year don’t we? How can it be the middle of January already? The seed catalogs are rolling in and tempting us to order everything that looks “tasty and different”. It won’t be too much longer before we can toy around with the idea of starting some seeds for the cool weather crops. Now that sounds exciting, doesn’t it?

January is the gardener’s month for study and introspection because who we are and what we want affects what our garden will become. While you are dreaming about warmer days, hold your own mini brainstorm for your garden. Pull out those seed catalogs, collect inspirational photos, read through your garden journal and jot down notes to make your dream a reality.

This month’s list of gardening tasks includes:

The Whole Garden
1) Collect seed and plant catalogs; 2) Check the dates on the seed packets you already own; 3) Read your catalogs thoroughly before ordering new seeds or plants; 4) Read gardening books and magazines for inspiration and new approaches to your landscape; 5) Study the bare bones of your garden and make notes on potential improvements; 6) Tour your garden to look for plant damage; 7) Plan new gardens; 8) Place your seed orders (so they don’t sell out of those new varieties); 9) Beware of a January thaw!

Trees and Shrubs
1) Prune dead or broken branches off trees; 2) Prune summer and fall-blooming woody vines and shrubs while they are dormant

House Plants
1) Routinely inspect houseplants and outdoor plants overwintered indoors for pests and diseases; 2) Water indoor plants less frequently until they return to active growth; 3) Pinch and turn houseplants to keep them shapely; 4) Keep houseplants clean

Fruits and Vegetables
1) Make a plan to rotate vegetable crops when designing next year’s garden
2) Prune fruit trees now that they are dormant

Have you had a chance in these past warm days to see what’s happening in your garden beds? Facebook has been full of photographs taken by worried gardeners. What will this warm snap do to the trees that are budding and the plants that are emerging? Only time will tell. I took some photographs of plants in my raised beds and found Swill chard greening up, as well as Kale and Parsley!

This is a great time to make sure the bird feeders are full and take some time to observe who is dining at your feeder station. The blue jays, woodpeckers, and cardinals have been joined by the juncos and some starlings. Everyone seems to be playing nicely together and enjoying the suet cakes, shelled peanuts and black oil sunflower seeds.

Get those seed catalogs out and start dreaming!