



Tom Harris, Ph. D., BCMG Class 13 “The Hill Country Gardener”
www.thehillcountrygardener.com

Gardening doesn't stop in Texas in December, but it does slow down considerably. Use the time to catch up on your note-taking and get some “catalog” time in. Mulch, mulch, mulch. Sometimes it's the only way to protect cold-tender plants. Spider mites thrive in warmth. Be sure to check your indoor plants for mites and take appropriate action.

Birds and Wildlife

- Suet is available in easy-to-use blocks that attract the woodpeckers, chickadees and titmice.
- Use weight-sensitive metal feeders.

Color

- After they freeze back, you can cut lantana, mallow hibiscus, esperanza and other cold sensitive plants to the ground.
- Get those spring-flowering bulbs in the ground this month.
- Plastic cups sunk in the ground and ½ filled with beer attract and drown slugs and snails. They like Budweiser best.
- It is not too late to plant pansies.
- December is a good time to transplant roses.

Shade Trees and Shrubs

- Mulch the fallen leaves with your lawn mower.
- Eliminate the mistletoe (a parasite) from your trees after the leaves fall.
- It's OK to plant trees in December...even bare-root trees.
- Consider a living Christmas tree. Arizona cypress or Italian Stone pines do well.
- December is a good month to prune oak trees. Avoid topping.

- Plant fruit trees on 8' x 8' raised beds with drip irrigation.

Ornamentals

- It's a good time to plant irises, daylilies, and other perennials.
- Divide spring and summer-flowering perennials during fall.

Turf Grass

- St. Augustine that is dry is very susceptible to freeze damage.

Fruits and Nuts

- This is a good month to plant bare root fruit and pecan trees.
- Wait until January to do any major fruit tree pruning.
- Collect pecans as they fall to the ground.

Vegetables

- Side-dress your cole crops and onions with a cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer or ammonium sulphate per 10 feet of row.
- If tomatoes are full sized, but not showing any color, pick them and bring them into the house. They'll ripen on the counter.

Questions?

Email gardener@gvtc.com or visit: www.thehillcountrygardener.com. and click on “Publications.”