

The Garden in January

By Rachel Anderson, Certified Professional Horticulturalist

Here it is, a new year again! January is a great time to begin your planning for the coming growing season. Plant and seed catalogs are beginning to appear in mailboxes, tantalizing you with the latest and greatest in new varieties of just about everything. I always get sucked into the vegetable section of seed catalogs, with promises of bigger yields and more delicious flavor with less effort. Amazing! Every year I try something new in the veggie garden and sometimes it's successful and sometimes not so much. (Tomatoes usually fall into the not so much category-I like to blame it on the weather rather than take full responsibility). My space is limited, so when something doesn't work out it's pretty disappointing. But at least I've learned something! Just thinking about the new season ahead with its promise of lush green growing things, and sunshine and gentle spring rain and songbirds singing their hearts out and...and...I just can't wait!

In the ornamental garden:

- The boughs from your Christmas tree make a great mulch. Prune them off and either spread them out whole or chop them up into smaller pieces and spread them around. We always save the remaining trunk over the year and then on Christmas Eve, saw it up and use it as our Yule Log.
- Remove the older leaves from your hellebores to better show off the emerging flowers. In the spring, do the opposite and remove the spent flowers to allow the new leaves to grow unimpeded.
- Take advantage of any calm and dry days to spray a dormant spray, like Lime Sulphur, on your fruit trees and roses. Dormant sprays help with the control of some insect pests and some fungal issues like scab on apples and black spot on roses. Be sure to fully read and follow the directions on the packaging and always wear protective clothing. And be prepared for the possibility of smelling like a rotten egg afterwards. Again, calm days are key!
- It's the beginning of the pruning season, and if you're unsure how to take care of your fruit trees, roses, or other shrubs, take advantage of the several amazing pruning classes that we have lined up this year. If you have a garden that has suddenly (or not so suddenly) gotten out of control, check out Cass Turnbull's class. She's a real pruning know it all-in a very good way. Remember to always call ahead to reserve your spot in any class as they fill up quickly.
- January marks the beginning of the bare root fruit tree, ornamental, and shrub season. We've got an excellent selection right now. Bare root trees are usually less expensive than potted or balled and burlapped, and they're lighter and easier to handle. This is when we have our absolute best selection of fruit trees, and some varieties are limited so hurry in if you're looking for something specific.
- It's also rose season. We'll have our best selection of roses in stock this month, including tons of exciting varieties for 2013. Check out our newly updated rose list to see what's new.

In the vegetable garden:

- Make plans!
- Consider creating a garden journal that includes a to scale drawing of your veggie beds. Make copies of your drawing and pencil in what you might like to plant where, and consider crop rotations too. Rotating crops even in small spaces helps to prevent disease and insect problems.

Happy New Year and happy planning! We've got a ways to go before we can do anything in earnest, but there's no harm in getting excited and looking forward to another great growing season.



About the author:

Rachel has been gardening since childhood, thanks to her mom, and has been part of the team at Christianson's since 2002. She's a Certified Professional Horticulturist with a passion for roses and vegetable gardening. Rachel and her family enjoy gardening together and now share their urban garden with a menagerie of ducks, chickens, two cats, and a dog.

*This article was first published in the January 2013 issue of **Garden Notes**, our monthly online newsletter. You can sign up for Garden Notes on the Newsletter page of our website (www.christiansonnursery.com) or sign up in person the next time you're in the Garden Store at the Nursery.*