

The Garden in January

By Rachel Anderson, *Certified Professional Horticulturist*

Happy New Year, everyone! I hope you all had a festive and joyous holiday! I am pretty glad when the holidays are over because it means a gradual return to longer days, even though winter has only just begun. Despite that fact, I am really excited to get out into my own garden this month and I'm excited that I feel excited to garden because now that I garden for a living I was afraid that I would lose some enthusiasm for an activity that most Americans consider a hobby. Also, I am really glad to be able to garden in a climate that allows me to do so in the winter. The other day, I was thinking about gardeners in areas of the mid-west where the ground is completely frozen solid and temperatures are in the teens on a regular basis. What do gardeners do there in the winter? How do they manage? I think I would lose my sanity and forsake gardening forever I imagine that I would burrow into a hole lined with goose down and sable, say good night until spring and hope that my eyes and my brain still function in that so distant season. So yes, I am very glad to be where I am and happy to be gardening in the wind, rain, and the dark. It could be worse! Oh! One more thing: not only can we garden all winter in the Pacific Northwest, but we can also enjoy a few sweet, winter blooms. My *Daphne mezereum* f. 'Alba' is in full bloom and fragrant (early!) along with *Viburnum bodnantense* 'Dawn', *Mahonia x media* 'Charity', and a few hellebores as well. Also, my garlic is poking up fresh bright green spikes of new growth through the soil and mulch. I think I'm going to be OK.

- If you have any flowering shrubs or trees in your garden right now, cut some branches to bring inside. There's no reason to completely starve yourselves!
- Do some raking and tidying up. Leaf mulch can get blown around, linger untidily in corners and blow-down from larger trees can litter a lawn making your yard look as though no one is home nor cares. It's incredible how just a few minutes of quick clean up can make you feel good about your garden again. I feel the same way about sweeping and vacuuming my house, which I'm sure you all remember from past articles, is in a near constant state of disarray.
- It's fruit tree pruning time! Sharpen your loppers and pruners and get out the ladders! Not sure what you're doing? Christianson's offers quite a few classes to help you figure it out.
- Clip away the old foliage from your hellebores to better show off the emerging flower buds.
- Look forward to a fresh selection of bare root fruit trees: lilacs, hydrangeas, and so much more are now arriving at Christianson's. It's also time to get excited about all the new roses for 2015, which have filled up the benches in House 5. The 2015 Rose List is now available off the Nursery's web site and Garden Notes, or pick up a copy at the Nursery.
- Tickets are now on sale for the Northwest Flower and Garden show which runs February 11-15. Advanced price is \$17, up to the day of the show, then the go up to \$22. Save \$5 and buy your tickets at the Nursery! The show is an excellent way to cure the winter blues and get inspired. Take free classes from amazing experts and get up to speed on all the hottest new plants,

tools, and techniques! Plus, Christianson's is running the flower buses February 11, 12 and 13. A round trip ticket is \$52 per person including the price of admission to the show! It's a great way to see the show without the hassle of driving down yourself and dealing with traffic and parking. Call the Nursery soon and make a reservation; the buses are popular and fill up fast. This year, Christianson's will have a large booth at the Show, located at the entrance to the north building, so make sure to stop by and say "hi" and check out the large selection of common and uncommon plants offered.

It's January! It's a new year and a new season. Resist the urge to curl up and sleep the winter away. There's beauty to behold out there as long as you're willing and as long as you have a warm hat and a pair of sturdy boots to help you along. If all else fails and the day is just too dark to venture out, then find inspiration in all the glossy, colorful plant catalogs that magically find their way to your mailbox. Good luck!