

The cool and sunny days we get here and there in December are the perfect time to get some fresh air and accomplish a few things in the garden. It is also an excellent time to do some light pruning on your evergreens and berry-producing shrubs to make gorgeous natural wreaths, sprays and arrangements to display around the house and to share with family and friends.

## Fertilizing

- Use wood ashes on your vegetable garden, bulb beds and lightly on your lawns if soil pH is below 6.0. Maximum amount to incorporate per year is 20 gallons/1000 ft<sup>2</sup>.
- Fertilize only actively-growing house plants as needed. [Houseplants](#)
- If weather is mild, fertilize pansies, snapdragons and other winter-blooming outdoor flowers.

## Planting

- After Christmas, plant live Christmas trees in the landscape. Keep live trees indoors no more than 14 days.
- Plant bare-root trees. [Planting trees and shrubs](#)

## Pruning

- Prune ornamental shrubs and berry-producing plants to make holiday arrangements and decorations. Don't prune edible berry plants at this time. [Pruning woody ornamentals](#)
- Remove "weed" or undesirable trees from your landscape.

## Propagation

- Take leaf cuttings of your favorite house plants including African violets and begonia.
- Divide Boston fern and re-pot.
- Hardwood cuttings of your landscape plants including forsythia, flowering quince, weigela, holly and hydrangea can be taken this month. [Propagation from cuttings](#)

## Lawn Care

- Keep tree leaves from collecting on your lawn; use a leaf blower on newly seeded lawns. Mulch the leaves and put on or incorporate into the garden.

## Miscellaneous To Do

- Put pine needles, wheat straw or floating row covers over your strawberry plants.
- Put a floating row cover or straw around edibles still in the garden.
- Continue to harvest leeks and kale.
- Cut back asparagus fronds.
- Apply broad leaf herbicide to control annual winter weeds if needed.
- Keep your living Christmas tree outside until you are ready to decorate. White pine is a type of living tree that will do well in much of North Carolina.
- Greenery will last longer if sprayed with an antitranspirant.
- Keep your cut Christmas tree in water throughout the holiday season.
- Remove the branches from your cut Christmas tree and lay them atop perennial beds for extra protection from the weather.
- Make a list of needed repairs on garden tools and equipment. Repair or have them repaired after the holidays.
- Shop around for garden products as gifts for your favorite gardener.
- Order fruit trees and grape vines for February and March planting.

Plants with colorful berries in December: Witch Hazel, Washington Hawthorn, Dogwood Trees, American Beautyberry, Chinese Holly, Foster Holly, Nellie R. Stevens Holly, Nandina, Pyracantha  
Blooming house plants in December: Amaryllis, Cyclamen, Poinsettia