

THE EL DORADO NURSERY AND GARDEN NEWSLETTER

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www.eldoradonursery.com



Jan/Feb 2021



GARDEN CALENDAR



What to do in January

- Closed New Year's Day. Happy New Year!
- Move living Christmas trees outdoors. Move them from house to patio to planting site gradually, allowing them to re-acclimate to the cold.
- Prop discarded cut Christmas trees near bird feeders as a staging area for small birds.
- Shop for bareroot fruit and shade trees, berries, vegetables, and other ornamentals.
- Prune fruit trees as needed. After pruning, clean up old leaves and debris to prevent spread of disease. Do not prune spring blooming shrubs until after they bloom. See article below.
- Buy vegetable and flower seeds at the nursery for your spring garden. Sow indoors.
- Plant winter annuals (primrose, pansy, etc.).
- Apply pre-emergents in the garden to prevent weeds.
- Apply 2nd dormant spray to fruit trees if you haven't already.
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What to do in February

- Need gift ideas? We sell gift certificates.
- Apply third and final dormant spray on fruit trees (just before bud break).
- Fertilize annuals and perennials with a low nitrogen starter fertilizer or rose & flower food.
- Prune roses and fruit trees as needed.
- Plant summer blooming bulbs.
- Fertilize trees planted this year just after bloom. See the web site for Fert Schedule <https://www.eldoradonursery.com/local-info>
- Apply iron to yellowing Gardenias, Azaleas, other acid loving plants, and Citrus.
- Sow seed indoors for spring planting.
- Start roses on a fungus prevention spray schedule. Come by the Nursery for advice on what to use and when.



We will continue to follow Social Distancing Guidelines for as long as it is needed. Masks required at the cash register and when showing a staff member pictures on your phone. Thank you.

WINTER BIRD CARE



Water, shelter and food are the three most important things you can help our feathered friends with in winter time.

Due to our cold winter region, now is the time to put out bird feeders to supplement food for the birds until natural food sources become available again in the spring.

Fill your feeders with oiled sunflower seed or thistle seed. These seem to be favorites to the birds in our area (hence less waste). Keep water available for drinking and bathing.

Place your feeders near shrubs or evergreen trees. This will give protection from predators such as cats.

Plants are the most important habitat element. They are a source of shelter and food. Plants provide fruits, berries, nuts, seeds, greens, sap and nectar.

Some plants with berries include snowberry, pyracantha, toyon, buckthorn, viburnum, hawthorn, holly, arbutus(strawberry tree), oregon grape, currants, elderberry, or beautyberry.



Bareroot Gardening

Right now it's probably cold out and all your plants for the most part are dormant and tucked in for the winter. Just as are we snuggled up close to the wood stove dreaming of sugar plums? Not sugar plums? How about getting jazzed because bare root season starts soon. It may look like a sea of dormant sticks but think of all that potential. More choices and more opportunity. All those varieties to pick, from apples to zinfandel grapes with lots in between.

Small fruits and berries usually arrive in early December. Asparagus is a perennial vegetable that takes 2-3 years to come into full production, so plant enough to feed your family the first time and have enough to pickle some. Set out roots 18" apart and figure a yield of 3-4 lbs. per 10' row. Other favorite vegetables are artichokes and rhubarb. Can you ever have enough strawberries or raspberries?

The major event happens early in January when the fruit, nut and ornamental trees arrive. That list on our website for your convenience. Read it and interview your family about varieties they like. Them come by the nursery to make your selections.

If the day is fair and you want to pre-dig before coming in, go ahead and dig your holes. Incorporate 20 to 25% organic matter into the native soil that was dug out of the hole. If you can't dig ahead of time or you still need soil amendment, no fear!

Bareroot gets its name because the plant is harvested in the field and shipped with "bare roots," not in soil. Upon arrival at the Nursery, we "heel" the plants into a peat pot and keep the correct moisture level until they are purchased. The roots can't dry out or be too wet. Planting them promptly after bringing them home is important. Once you bring home the bare root tree, they can be "heeled in" for a day or two until holes are ready. Simple lay them in a protected area and cover the roots with lightly moist soil, either from the garden or potting soil. Do not leave them where they will be exposed to a rainstorm as it may wash the soil away allowing the roots to dry out.



Plan to space large trees, such as walnuts, 50 - 60 feet apart. Apples and pears, 10 -15 feet apart. Don't let the walnuts shade the shorter fruit trees.

People often ask when reading the fruit tree descriptions what the 500 or 700 hours mean. That is the number of chilling hours the plant needs at 45 degrees or below during the dormant period in order to produce a decent crop of fruit.

Another approach in planning the family fruit orchard is backyard orchard culture. The objective is to get more fruit in a prolonged harvest period and in a smaller area. It is also easier to protect from the deer. Further information can be found on our web site.

Why plant bare root? Because the choices are extensive. The plant has not ever been in a pot so it can't be root bound. You are not introducing another soil as you would with containerized stock, and you can start the training process from the beginning. Usually bare root plants are priced less than containerized plants. And it's fun to get out in the garden in winter!

Winter Watering Tips

by Shilo Nielsen



It seems like we shouldn't have to water in the winter, doesn't it? Just turn off the ol' controller and don't worry about that pesky drip (or other irrigation) system until spring! If only it was that simple. Here are tips so you know when to selectively water some plants in winter:

- If you experience freezing weather only occasionally and there has been insufficient rain or snowfall, water deeply a day or so before a freeze is forecast. Be sure to water the entire root system – a good rule of thumb is to water an area the size of the plant's drip line.
- Evergreen plants need attention because they are not dormant like deciduous trees and still need water in the winter.
- Be extra attentive to newly planted trees and shrubs. Not only are their roots less established, but the churned-up soil can allow cold air to penetrate deeper to the roots.
- Water when the air temperature is above 40° F, and don't water if there's snow or ice on the ground.
- Water early in the day, so the plants have time to absorb it before the temperature drops at night.
- Don't get the foliage wet because tender leaves can freeze. Commercial growers sometimes use sprinkler irrigation to protect plants from frost, but it requires constant sprinkling and should only be done under specific conditions.
- Be careful not to over water. Once or twice per month should be sufficient (unless freezing temps are predicted and there has been little precipitation) – the plants will not be absorbing water as fast as they do during the growing season, and the cool soil can easily become soggy.
- For living Christmas trees still in containers (outside), be sure that the soil does not dry out completely. If newly planted, water deeply (and very slowly) a couple times of week during the winter if there is no precipitation. Emitters or hand-watering should be right at the root ball until rooted in the soil (emitters should be 6-8" from the trunk for the first year). The gallon size of the tree's container is the number of gallons of water it will need (i.e. a five-gallon tree will need five gallons of water). See our Living Christmas Tree handout for more info.
- Don't forget, if it is freezing at night, drain your outside pipes, mechanical timers, drip tubing, etc to prevent damage. Bring in hose bib timers in the winter.

