



Monthly Gardening Tips

January: Recycle evergreen tree branches (cut into 2- to 3-foot sections), and other evergreen material as mulch for garden and perennial beds.

February: Order seed, bulb, and nursery catalogs to assist in planning your garden for the upcoming year.

March: Cut back to the ground all perennials and ornamental grasses that were left standing for winter interest.

April: Plant trees and shrubs. Wait one year to fertilize new woody plantings.

May: Plant warm-season flowering annuals, vines, herbs, and vegetables after the Chicago area's average last frost date of May 15. Cautious gardeners often wait until Memorial Day.

June: Tall, floppy plants such as chrysanthemums, asters, and tall sedums can be cut back by as much as half or pinched to regulate their height.

July: Newly planted trees, shrubs, perennials, and roses must receive 1 inch of water per week throughout their root zones. This is especially important in hot, dry weather.

August: Continue to water, weed, and monitor for insects on all garden plants.

September: September is a good time to begin a compost heap, layering grass clippings, fallen leaves, soil, and a little moisture. Or: Early this month, entire lawns or bare patches may be seeded with appropriate grass seed mix.

October: Begin to plant spring-blooming bulbs. Mulch area after planting.

November: Cut to the ground all remaining dried perennial material not intended for winter interest. Add to your compost pile.

December: Remove decorative foil from bottom of gift plant pots or punch holes in the foil to allow water to drain properly.