

Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

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Jan/Feb Success Tips

1. **Spring is coming, but not yet!** Now is a busy time *planting, pruning, and applying dormant sprays.*
2. If we continue to get little rain or no rain, **check the soil** around plants that need more moisture, and water them occasionally if the top inch of soil is dry.
3. **Valentine's Day is coming**—looking for a special gift? We have colorful blooming plants for indoors, plus special plants for the yard that will provide flowers or fruit for many years to come.
4. **Prune** deciduous *fruit and shade trees, plus roses.* Wait to prune any winter and early spring-flowering plants until after they've finished blooming.
5. **We Have Roses**—There's a place in every garden for at least one rose, and once you plant a bush, climber, or tree rose, you'll be hooked!



It's Fruit Tree Time!

Stay healthier and put more variety in your meals and snacks by selecting **FRUIT TREES** now! You'll taste the difference too, because we carry better-tasting varieties than you'll find in supermarkets. Plus, you can harvest these ripe off the tree, at the peak of flavor!

This is the time to choose them. The winter rains will help their roots get established before the warm spring activates a burst of growth.

Every garden should have fruit trees. If your yard is small, save space by planting dwarf varieties or planting three to four trees with the trunks about two feet apart.

Be sure to amend the soil in the hole with *Gardner & Bloome Harvest Supreme* and add a little *Gro-Power* to provide extra nutrients.

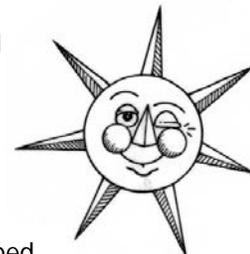
Also, just arrived—delicious high-antioxidant *blueberries, raspberries, and other berries, artichokes, asparagus, and rhubarb.*



Shrubs That Welcome Spring

Winter doesn't have to be a boring or colorless time in your garden. During the next few months you can have blooming shrubs if you plant the right ones now. Here are some shrubs with flowers that bloom either in the winter or very early spring. Come in and select some—they'll bring beauty to your garden every year.

- ✿ **Abutilon** (flowering maple) produces showy bell-shaped flowers in yellow, red, pink or white throughout the year. The maple-like leaves appear on shrubs that grow as wide as they grow tall (10' high and wide).
- ✿ **Camellias** fit beautifully into every garden. The perfectly-formed flowers in red, white and pink, are produced on branches with deep green shiny leaves.
- ✿ **Ceanothus** (wild lilac) plants can be covered with blue, deep purple, or white flowers in late winter or spring, depending on the variety. These California natives are low-water to very drought tolerant, depending on the variety and where they are planted.
- ✿ **Weigela**, an old favorite, has pink trumpet-shaped flowers that attract hummingbirds. The arching branches are covered with blooms.



Other excellent very early blooming shrubs include *azaleas, euryops, hardenbergia, Indian hawthorn, rosemary, arctostaphylys (manzanita), leptospermums, lilacs, redbud, and grevillea.*

Winter Cleanup for a Healthy Garden!

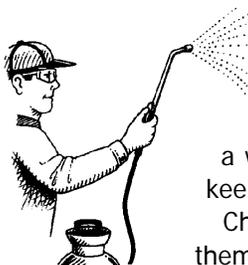
Time spent cleaning up your garden now will really pay off! Garden debris harbors snails, earwigs and many other pests, and a host of plant diseases. By raking up and either composting or disposing of leaves and other plant debris, you'll eliminate the protective winter home of a great many pests.

Be sure to also remove any tree fruit "mummies" (shriveled fruit that remains on the tree or ground), because brown rot and other diseases overwinter on these fruits.

Many insects and their eggs survive the winter in bark cracks and crevices. Use our **dormant oil spray** this winter to control these.

Get rid of weeds by hand weeding or applying a weed killer. Use our **pre-emergent weed killer** to keep more seeds from germinating.

Check rain gutters for leaves and branches, and clean them out as needed. Clogged gutters will eventually leak and cause damage.



Healthy Low-Cal Snacks!

Did the holiday treats find their way to your waist line? Here are some delicious snacks to curb those late afternoon hunger pangs and get you back into a healthy lifestyle. And the best news is that *each snack is under 100 calories!*

Fruit: Nibble one cupful of high antioxidant *blueberries* or vitamin C rich *mandarin oranges*, or two cupfuls of *strawberries* or *sliced apples*—each serving is less than 100 calories.

Veggies: Dip 1 cup of *broccoli*, *baby carrots*, or *bell peppers* into a couple tablespoons of *hummus* for a wholesome treat!

Nuts: contain heart-healthy fats and protein and make an excellent snack when consumed in moderation. You can enjoy *14 almonds*, *17 peanuts*, or *25 pistachios* without consuming more than 100 calories.

World's Largest Tuber Blooms in Kew Gardens

An *Amorphophallus titanum* (Titan arum), originally from the tropical rain forests of Sumatra, finished its rare and spectacular flowering in Kew Gardens last November. The Titan arum tuber (or corm) typically weighs 55 to 110 pounds, but can weigh as much as 200 pounds.



But the hefty size and weight of the tuber is not what the Titan arum is best known for. When the flowers are ready for pollination, the spadix (the flower-bearing stalk which can grow as high as 10 feet) *actually heats up and emits a nauseating smell* to attract pollinators like carrion beetles and flesh flies.

The stench, described as "rotting flesh", has earned the plant the nickname of *Corpse Flower* and is at its most pungent during the first 12 hours of its limited 24-48 hour bloom.

The plant is rather unpredictable in its flowering patterns. It can go for years or decades between blooms. *The Huntington* in San Marino holds the honor of the first Titan arum flowering in California in 1999. Their fourth bloom was in June, 2010. The *U.C. Botanical Garden at Berkeley* has had six gasp-inducing blooms since 2005.

If you missed all of these unusual events, you can enjoy one of the numerous time-lapse video clips on youtube.com—our favorite is found under "*Amorphophallus titanum at Selby Botanical Gardens*". No gas mask required!

Trick to "E-x-p-a-n-d" a Small Garden

Here's a simple way to visually *double* the space of a small garden: install a full-length mirror!

By mounting a mirror on an enclosing wall or fence, you will create the illusion of added depth. Just be sure to set it at a slight angle so that you don't see your reflection when you look directly into it. This creates the impression of a doorway into another garden space.



Finish the installation by framing the mirror with wood, tiles, or brick. Vines can be used to mask the mirror's edges as well.

Apple Tart

You'll love how quick and easy this tart is to make and serve for breakfast or a healthy dessert!

- 1 sheet (from a 17.3-oz box) frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 3 small baking apples
- 3 Tbs. sugar
- 1/4 c. apricot preserves, melted

1. Heat oven to 375°. Unfold pastry onto a lightly floured surface. With rolling pin, roll into a 11" x 10" rectangle.

2. Place pastry rectangle on baking sheet and fold over edges to form a crust (roll about 1/2" of pastry all around), pinch lightly. Lightly brush top edges with beaten egg. Pierce bottom of pastry all over with a fork.

3. Peel, core and thinly slice apples (we taste-tested *Granny Smith*, *Fuji*, and *Pink Lady*—all were yummy!) Arrange overlapping in a single layer on tart bottom. Lightly brush pastry edge with beaten egg. Sprinkle sugar evenly over pastry and apples.

4. Bake 25 to 30 minutes until pastry is puffed and golden, and apples are tender. Remove to serving platter. Brush apples with melted apricot preserves. Serve warm or at room temperature.



A Gardening Valentine

*Cabbage always has a heart, Green Beans string along.
You're such a Tomato, will you Peas to me belong?*

*You've been the Apple of my eye, you know how much I care;
So Lettuce get together, we'd make a perfect Pear.*

*Now, something's sure to Turnip, to prove you can't be Beet;
So, if you Carrot all for me, let's let our Tulips meet.*

*Don't Squash my hopes and dreams now, bee my Honey, dear;
Or tears will fill Potato's eyes, while Sweet Corn lends an ear.*

*I'll Cauliflower shop and say, your dreams are Parsley mine.
I'll work and share my Celery, so be my VALENTINE.*

~ Author Unknown

