

This Month in the Garden

December Tasks

Your gardens may be going dormant but that doesn't mean you must be deprived of all the fun you have gardening. Here are some things you might consider as the holidays allow.

- Plan ahead for next spring. What kinds of improvements might you make to your garden to make it easier to maintain, prettier, better for local fauna, more environmentally friendly, or whatever you desire? Now, is a great time to make the plans for what you will do, research how to do it, and figure out how to fit it into your budget.
- As the weather cools, birds and squirrels might have less food supplies. Consider visiting your local farm or pet supply and get feeders and some feed to show your love.
- Take care of your gardening tools. Your tools will last longer and be more effective if they are maintained properly. Review [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Garden Tool Care and Maintenance](#) to learn how.
- Now that your lawn mower is being used less frequently (or not at all!), it is a good time to do some routine lawn mower maintenance. Learn more about [lawn mower care and safety](#).
- Rake up fallen leaves and put them into your garden beds as natural mulch as described in these [Earth-Kind® principles to handle yard waste](#).
- Plant hardy trees and shrubs. No, it is not too late to plant woody trees and shrubs if you don't plant them immediately before a freeze and you water judiciously. They still need to be watered but must not have too much water, which might damage the roots if the temperature dips too low. Use the [Earth-Kind® Plant Selector](#) to help choose the best ones for your garden.
- If the weather is dry, you might still need to water your yard and gardens occasionally.
- Gather up materials to protect immovable plants during freezes. Learn [how to protect your plants](#).



Birds (and squirrels!) will enjoy this buffet.

And here is one big task you should probably not do: prune! Unless there are some obviously dead branches that need to be trimmed, most pruning should probably wait. You especially do not need to trim crape myrtles. The drastic pruning that is frequently perpetrated on these beautiful plants is called "crape murder" by many master gardeners. Learn more about ["crape murder."](#)

December Color in Fort Bend County

Certain dependable December blooms are sure to keep you smiling. Consider these.

- [Pansy](#): These lovely little charmers come in a variety of colors and are sure to perk up a place in your garden. Bonus: the blooms are edible!
- [Amaryllis](#): This perennial bloom is easily grown in pots and comes in a variety of colors. [Here](#) is a source for more information about this beautiful flower.
- [Poinsettia](#): Although many people think of poinsettias as seasonal plants, they are actually beautiful perennials. You might purchase one this month and then transplant it into your garden to enjoy its blossoms again next December.
- [Christmas cactus](#): Don't be fooled by the name of this plant! My mother's Christmas cactus bloomed whenever it wanted and it wanted to bloom frequently throughout the year. It thrives indoors in pots but does need to be re-potted as it grows.



Pink and White Amaryllis

You might also want to visit the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners' Demonstration Gardens at the AgriLife Extension office in Rosenberg to be inspired by what is blooming there.