

Note that the information in our monthly tips is intended for gardening in the Bountiful, UT area and may not be accurate for different climates.

January Gardening

Ave High 37° F
Ave Low 19° F
Ave Moisture 1.35"

Each year is different, let the weather be your guide. Use this gardening guide as a simple reminder as to what needs to be done in your garden this month.

January is a quiet month for most gardeners. The flurry of the holiday season has passed, but the flurry of the weather is still a real threat.



Long nights and short days bring out the urge for us to wait out the worst of winter weather. However, there are still plenty of gardening projects that may need to be addressed.

Wild Bird

√ Feed the birds which may not be able to find food due to snow on the ground. If there is snow on the ground and you don't have a feeder, a piece of plywood, or cardboard, will create a very good feeding area.

√ **Bird feeding tip:** Birds are attracted to fresh, unfrozen water. Water is an important part of the backyard bird habitat. Wild birds need a continuous supply of fresh clean water at all times of the year, for both drinking and bathing. On hot summer days, birds can be drawn to a birdbath. During the colder, months, fresh unfrozen water is just as important. A source of water can dramatically increase the number of wild birds you attract in your backyard. Birds that may not visit your feeding station will visit water. Try a birdbath heater to keep water available.



√ Always buy high quality wild bird seed, such as **Wild Delight® Mixes**, to feed the birds. They may be more expensive to purchase, but you will get less waste, and the birds will eat more healthy food. Read our handouts about **Wild Bird Food** and **Wild Delight Mixes** for more information.

√ **Black Oil Sunflower Seed** is the most desired seed of wild birds! The high oil content makes it popular with birds and provides the heat and energy needed to live. It boasts a high oil content and has a thin shell which all birds, even the small ones, can break open.

√ **Thistle (Nyger Seed)** is the choice of goldfinches and finches. It is considered the premier seed for attracting many varieties of finches and smaller song birds. Its high oil content constitutes a highly nutritious and valuable food.

√ Suet is a high energy formulation of animal fat and other ingredients to attract insect eating birds. Suet is a quick source of heat and energy for birds, who's metabolisms are set on fast forward. It traditionally has been used as a good substitute for the insects that birds usually feed upon but are not plentiful in cold weather. Suet can be provided all year long.

√ These are websites you can visit for more information about wild birds and wild bird food.

<http://www.wilddelight.com/WildDelight/>

<http://www.wilddelight.com/WildDelight/birdguide/index.php>

<http://www.birdsforever.com/chart.html>

Trees & Shrubs

√ In the event of snow, be sure to shake or brush off the snow from the branches of your evergreens and shrubs. The light fluffy snow poses no real threat, but if it should become wet and frozen, the weight dramatically increases. Branches are more brittle when the plants are cold and dormant. The weight of the snow may snap them off. Any damaged limbs should be removed as soon as possible.



√ In the event of no snow, be sure to water your plants once a month. Newly planted shrubs should be monitored closely since their root system may not be completely established. Broadleaf evergreens may also need a little extra attention during warm, windy or dry weather conditions.

√ Forsythia, Pussy Willow, Crabapple, Flowering Pear and Cherry, and Quince branches can be cut and brought into the house now for forcing. The warmth in the home will bring some early blossoms into your home. Place cut stems in a vase of water and change the water every 4 days.

Houseplants

√ Don't forget your houseplants! Dust on the foliage can clog the leaf pores, so clean them up with a damp cloth, or a quick shower under the tap. On very cold nights, it is a good idea to close the curtains or blinds between the window and your houseplants to keep them warm. Read our handout **Healthy Houseplants** for more information.

√ Make certain that your plants have sufficient humidity, by setting them on a tray filled with clean pebbles and a little water, or by simply setting a cup of water nearby.

√ You can force Hyacinth, Paperwhite Narcissus, and Tulip bulbs into bloom during the winter. Plant paperwhites in a shallow bowl of pebbles and water. They should bloom in about a month. Hyacinths and tulips need 8 to 12 weeks of cold before they will bloom, so you need to plan ahead. Read our Handouts **Forcing Bulbs**, **Forcing Paperwhites**, and **Forcing Tulips** for more information.

√ Keep an eye open for insects on your houseplants. Read our handout **Houseplant Pests** for more information.

√ Some houseplants are sensitive to the fluorine and chlorine in tap water. Water containers should stand



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overnight to allow these gases to dissipate before using on plants. Do not use soft water to water your houseplants.

√ Turn your houseplants 1/4 turn each week to keep them uniform.

√ If you plan to keep your poinsettia through the summer, be sure to fertilize it regularly, put in a well lighted area, and be careful not to over water it.

√ Enjoy your amaryllis. When one blossom stem fades, remove it. If your bulb is large, it may send up another flower stem. Fertilize it regularly and do not remove the leaves, if you want to keep it for another year.



Miscellaneous

√ Extra time this month might well be spent getting your garden tools ready for spring. Sharpen and oil tools such as shovels, shears, mowers and pruning tools.

√ Power tools, such as weed eaters and power mowers, may benefit from a good tune-up. Either drain all the gas from the machines, or add stabilizer to the gasoline to prevent carburetor problems.

√ Build a potting table. It will come in handy next month when you start planting seeds.

√ Spray your snow shovel with Pam or mineral oil to help keep snow from sticking to it.

√ Learn how to 'Deer Proof' your yard. The only sure method to prevent deer damage in your yard is to use 'Deer Fencing' or physically cover your plants. However, you can try repellents such as Liquid Fence, Not Tonight Deer, or Bonide Repels-All. Wolf, Coyote, and Mountain Lion urine may also give the deer second thoughts about browsing in your yard. Another deterrent is an **Ultra Sonic Animal and Deer Chaser**. This product uses ultra sonic sound waves to irritate many different types of animals including dogs, cats, birds, raccoons, and deer.

√ To learn more about Deer Proofing your yard, please read our [*Animal Repellent Handout*](#), or download a copy of [*Minimizing Deer Damage*](#) from the Utah division of Wildlife Resources.



<http://wildlife.utah.gov/habitat/deer-browse.php>

√ Schedule your pest management and fertilizer applications. It's often difficult to remember what fertilizer you used and when you applied it if you don't record it. Track usage of every application and record the name of the product, which plants were treated and the amount used.

√ Curl up with a good book and learn more about gardening.

√ When shoveling, scatter snow instead of piling it up on the lawn next to driveway and walks. Fireplace ashes can be spread on top of the snow to encourage faster melting.

√ Fireplace ashes can be saved to use as a fertilizer for lawns and many plants. Do not save ashes if you burn plastics or cardboard - these products may produce toxic substances when burned.

√ Be careful using ice melters on your cement and around your shrubs; too much can ruin concrete and kill plants. Use ice melters sparingly. Ammonia sulphate fertilizer melts ice, but it can damage concrete more than salt does. Urea is safe to use on concrete. Urea melts ice but not if the temperature is too cold. Salt, Fertilizer and Commercial Ice Melters all have advantages and disadvantages. Read our handout **Salt, Fertilizer or Ice Melter** for more information.

√ When pruning diseased branches, sterilize tools with a one part bleach, nine parts water solution in between cuts. Dry your tools at day's end and rub them lightly with oil to prevent rusting.



Flowers and Vegetables

√ Check bulbs in storage for rot and decay. Discard damaged ones. If the bulbs are dry, moisten them lightly.

√ Start Begonias bulbs and Geranium seeds. You can also start a few *very early tomato plants* if you have room.

√ Plant an early crop of onion and broccoli seed indoors. Plant them outside in March. Keep a frost blanket handy - just in case. Enjoy fresh vegetables 2 or 3 weeks before your neighbors. **It's worth the extra effort and risk!**



√ Put columbine and verbena seeds in the refrigerator to chill for three to four weeks. Put delphinium seeds in the freezer for three to four weeks.

√ To extend the vase life of cut flowers you should:
1. - Recut stems underwater with a sharp knife.
2. - Remove any stem foliage that would be underwater.
3. - Use a commercial flower preservative.
4. - Display flowers in a cool spot, away from direct sunlight.



Well..... if you thought there was nothing to do in the garden this month.....