

December Monthly Reminders



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

Cooperative
Extension

Pima County -Master Gardener Program

Planting

- Plant cold-hardy flowers such as snapdragons, nemesia, petunias, pansies, stock, alyssum, million bells, and geraniums.
- Plant seeds of cool-weather vegetables such as lettuces, peas, radishes, carrots, chard, kale, parsnips, and beets

Fertilizing

- Apply ammonium sulfate or various organic sources of nitrogen to vegetables-- blood meal, bat guano, fish emulsion, worm castings. A solution of nitrogen fertilizer can be applied to foliage when soil is too cold for plants to use fertilizer applied to the soil. (Refer to *Fertilizing Home Gardens in Arizona* [AZ1020](#))
- Over-seeded Bermuda grass lawns need applications of ammonium phosphate once per month.

Watering

- Adjust your irrigation frequencies for December-March per Arizona Department of Water guidelines.

Maintenance

- Keep poinsettias healthy by locating them away from drafts and direct sunlight. They prefer bright, indirect light during the day and a cool location at night. Keep the soil evenly moist, as over- or under-watering will cause the leaves to yellow and drop off. Fertilize monthly with a water-soluble houseplant fertilizer. After all danger of frost is over, poinsettias can be planted outside in a shady location.
- Repot houseplants, using high quality potting soil. Plants may need to be moved to brighter locations. Reduce the amount of water and fertilizer during the winter season when many plants are dormant.
- Apply Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) if caterpillars are eating holes in cabbage, lettuce, broccoli, and cauliflower. It is not harmful to animals or humans.
- Pick exposed lemons and limes before a hard freeze. Some damage to these fruits on upper and outer portions of the tree will occur when temperatures drop to 28 degrees. Other types of citrus fruits can handle cold temperatures better.
- Continue to watch for cold nights and protect plants as needed (Refer to *Frost Protection* [AZ 1002](#)).
- Cap cold-sensitive cacti, such as totem pole, golden barrel, and young saguaro. Placing a cap over the top of these cacti using a paper grocery bag or Styrofoam cup will protect the delicate growing tip from the cold. After the freeze, remove the cap, but have it handy to use again.

- Begin harvesting grapefruit at the end of the month, picking only those you need. The longer they stay on the tree, they sweeter they become, and fruit may be left on the tree for several months.
- Do NOT prune frost-damaged plants until new growth appears in the spring when danger of freezing is past.
- Prune deciduous trees and shrubs while dormant. Delay pruning spring-flowering shrubs until after they bloom. (Refer to *Pruning Deciduous Shade Trees* [AZ 1139](#))
- If you have had infestations in the past, spray roses and deciduous flowering fruiting trees with horticultural oil to kill over-wintering insects.

Bavier/Green 2017