

January landscaping activities

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For The News-Review

Douglas County Extension gave a grand send-off in December to our longtime horticulture agent Steve Renquist. His always timely gardening advice will be missed.

Speaking of garden care, here are some important tasks to put on your garden calendar for January.

Now is a great time for planting trees and shrubs into your landscape. Buying a tree is an important decision. Before you decide what to plant, decide where to plant. Let the planting location dictate the tree or shrub species you select, rather than the other way around. Carefully seek out a proper location for it.

Although you may be buying a tree to add beauty to your home landscape, trees also serve other important functions in your landscape. Proper placement of trees in your yard can reduce heating and cooling costs by as much as 10-20%. Trees and shrubs conserve water, air and soil, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Shade trees provide living, nesting, and gathering places for many birds and animals and offer shelter year round. Trees and other plants with abundant fruits and seeds are particularly attractive to birds.

Large shade trees act as an outdoor ceiling and give a more intimate feeling to your yard and street. Trees and shrubs can provide privacy and separate one area from another. Trees also cleanse the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen.



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January is also a good time to move any shrubs or perennial ornamental to new locations. Plan to replace varieties of ornamental plants that are susceptible to disease with resistant cultivars. Use dormant sprays of lime sulfur or copper fungicide on roses for general disease control, or plan to replace susceptible varieties with disease-resistant plants.

It may seem early, but January is the best time to begin planning for your 2022 vegetable garden. Check with your local retail garden or nursery stores for seeds and seed catalogs. If you keep a garden journal, you can consult it in the winter, so you can better plan for the growing season.

Order seed varieties that performed well for you. Also make a map of your garden, so you can practice proper plant rotation. Take a soil test to determine your garden's nutrient needs, especially if you haven't done one in a couple of years.

The Douglas County Extension provides this service for a small fee.

For yard upkeep, remember to water landscape plants underneath wide eaves and in other sites shielded from rain. If rain is lacking, to prevent your landscape plants from drying out, water plants deeply every six to eight weeks.

Now is a great time to mulch

all trees and shrubs. Mulches have many positive effects on soils. In general, organic mulches conserve water, reduce weeds, improve soil quality, and enhance plant growth.

Check your lawn for moss. While moss can thrive in a wide variety of environmental conditions and soil types, it is most common in lawns that are mowed too short, infertile, wet, shady or some combination of these factors. In our area, growth normally starts with fall rains and reaches a peak in early spring.

Because most grasses grow poorly in winter, mosses are able to invade and dominate lawns in only a few months. When striving to maintain a high-quality lawn time should be spent on the primary cultural practices of mowing, fertilization and irrigation.

Increasing your mowing height will increase turf grass rooting depth, and increasing your mowing frequency will improve turf grass density, both of which will ultimately reduce the occurrence of moss in your lawn.

Do you have fruit trees? In January, scout cherry trees for signs and symptoms of bacterial canker. Remove infected branches with clean pruners or saw. Sterilize tools before each new cut. Burn or send the branches to a landfill. Rake and destroy fallen leaves.

Spray peach trees with approved fungicides to combat peach leaf curl and shot hole fungus. You can also plant peach curl-resistant cultivars such as 'Frost', 'Q1-8' or 'Creswell'. There are many fungicides and insecticides that are



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Father and son planting a tree. January is a great time for planting trees and shrubs.

effective for managing the diseases and insects for fruit trees.

Along with using pesticides, there are cultural and biological practices also that can help prevent or manage diseases and insects. The best way to manage diseases and insects in your orchard is to combine methods. Be sure to call your Douglas County Extension for advice.

It is important to monitor your house plants during the winter months for correct water and fertilizer; guard against insect infestations; clean dust

from leaves.

Lastly, watch for field mice damage on lower trunks of trees and shrubs. Eliminate hiding places by removing weeds. Use traps and approved baits as necessary.

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