



THE GARDEN SPADE



A monthly Gardening Publication of the University of Missouri Extension -- Southeast and East Central Regions

Feeding Birds In Winter

by Katie Kammler

One of my chores as a kid was filling the birdfeeders in the winter time. I always enjoyed watching the birds come to the feeders and seeing all the different kinds that we could get at one time. Some were gluttons and would chase others away and other times there would be up to ten birds sharing the same feeder at the same time.



Just like people, some birds are finicky eaters, such as tufted titmice and chickadees, whereas birds like mourning doves and white-throated sparrows will eat about any type of seed. Black oil sunflower seeds and white millet are the best for attracting birds. Milo (grain sorghum), wheat, and oats are in a lot of the seed mixes but not as attractive to birds. It is cheaper to purchase a single seed in bulk, such as black oil sunflower seed, than buying the mixes, however, for convenience and space limitations, most people find it easier to buy the mixes.

Feeders can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make them. You can just scatter seed on the ground if you want it to be simple. Otherwise there are many kinds of feeders available; most depend on

what you want to feed and what kind of style you are going for. It also depends on how much seed you want to put out or how often you want to refill your feeder. As a kid, we made many bird feeders out of recycled 2-liter soda bottles, poking holes for a dowel rod perch and feeding holes.

Different birds have different feeding habits. Songbirds, such as the dark-eyed junco, white-crowned sparrow, and Harris sparrow prefer to feed directly on the ground or from platform feeders. Cardinals and blue jays will feed either on the ground or from a hanging feeder, depending on how



easy it is to get the seed from the feeder. Goldfinches and chickadees will feed on a window feeder and come in close to people. These type of feeders are great for children! Woodpeckers, Carolina wrens and bluebirds enjoy suet feeders which come in several different styles. Conveniently, the birds that feed on the hanging feeders will lose some seed to the ground where the ground feeders can pick it up. Also any sunflower seeds that they miss will come up in the spring for a sunflower garden. So you can enjoy the flowers and then the goldfinches will clean off

January 2013

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by Katie Kammler

all the seeds when they are ripe.

If you would like to find out more about feeding birds, Missouri Department of Conservation have some great guides and books that cover a broad spectrum of information on identifying and feeding birds and attracting them to your backyard.

When you can't be out enjoying flowers and vegetables in the garden, enjoying all the colorful birds in a dull winter landscape is the next best thing!

Table 1. Birdseed Preferences of Common Birds

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Canary Seed | 6. Oats - Hulled (Groats) | 11. Sunflower - Grey-striped |
| 2. Crack corn-fine | 7. Peanuts - Hearts | 12. Sunflower - hulled |
| 3. Millet - Red Proso | 8. Safflower Seed | 13. Thistle (Niger) |
| 4. Millet - White Proso ("White") | 9. Sunflower - Black oil type | 14. Wheat |
| 5. Milo (Sorghum) | 10. Sunflower - Black-striped | |

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
American goldfinch	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	H	M	H	H	L
Blue jay	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	M	H	H	L	L	L
Chickadee	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	H	H	M	L	L
Common Grackle	L	H	L	L	L	L	M	L	H	H	H	M	L	L
House Sparrow	M	M	M	H	L	L	L	L	M	M	M	M	L	L
Mourning Dove	H	M	H	H	M	L	M	M	H	M	M	H	M	M
Northern Cardinal	L	L	L	M	L	L	L	M	H	H	H	M	L	M
Purple Finch	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	H	H	H	M	M	L
Song Sparrow	H	L	H	H	L	L	M	M	M	M	M	M	L	L
Tufted Titmouse	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	H	H	L	L	L
White-crowned Sparrow	M	M	H	H	M	L	H	L	H	H	M	H	L	L
White-throated Sparrow	M	H	H	H	M	M	M	M	H	H	M	H	L	M

H = High attractiveness relative to standard feed (more than 50% as attractive)
M = Moderate attractiveness relative to standard feed (from 15-50% as attractive)
L = Low attractiveness relative to standard feed (less than 15% as attractive)

This chart is from the Missouri Botanical Garden Guide on Bird Gardening. <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/Portals/0/Gardening/Gardening%20Help/Factsheets/Bird%20Gardening24.pdf>

Time To Turn In Master Gardener Hours!

By Donna Aufdenberg

It is time to turn in your **Master Gardener Volunteer Hours!** If you have already completed your volunteer hours for the year, please send them to your local Master Gardener Coordinator. Addresses and contact information for coordinators are located on the last page of this newsletter.

If you need a new copy of the Master Gardener Service Record Sheet, you can find it at <http://mg.missouri.edu/mgforms.htm> or contact your local coordinator and they will send you one.

You can also report directly to the Master Gardener program assistant. <http://report.missourimastergardener.com/>

Every year we update the Master Gardener Directory. If you have not turned in Master Gardener Hours for 3 years, you will be moved to the inactive list. If you have not turned in hours in previous years however, you still want to be involved, please let us know! If any of your information has changed (address, phone, or email), please let us know.

These hours are important to us! They help ensure the continuance of the program.

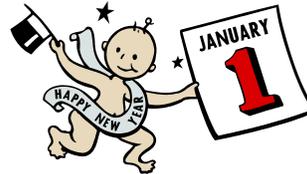
If you have problems reporting hours, let one us know...we are here to help!

January Gardening Calendar

By Donna Aufdenberg

Outdoor flowering plants and Ornamentals

- Gently brush off heavy snows from tree and shrub branches.
- To reduce injury, allow ice to melt naturally from plants. Attempting to remove the ice may damage plants further.
- Limbs damaged by ice or snow should be pruned off promptly to prevent bark from tearing.
- On warm days, check to see if any perennials have been heaved by freezing and thawing of soil. Firmly press down any that have lifted and cover with at least 2 inches of organic mulch.
- Plan herbaceous flower beds now. Changes can be made early in the spring.



Indoor Plants

- Wash the dust off of house plant leaves on a regular basis. This allows the leaves to gather light more efficiently and will result in better growth.
- Start new plants from cuttings to revive overgrown plants.
- Try not to over-water plants during the winter months. Always check the soil for dryness before watering.
- If plants seem to dry out too fast, make sure they are sitting away from areas near heat vents or draftier areas.

Vegetable Gardening

- Review your vegetable garden plans. Perhaps a smaller garden with fewer weeds and insects will give you more produce.
- As seed and nursery catalogs arrive, think of crops and varieties that you want for the upcoming garden season.
- Analyze last year's planting, fertilizing and spraying records. Make notations to reorder successful varieties, as well as those you wish to try again.
- Before ordering new seed, do germination tests on seeds to see if the seeds are still viable.

Miscellaneous

- Take time now to relax and read all of those horticultural magazines and garden books that were put aside during the busy holiday season.
- Draw a map of your garden and make copies of it. Beds usually stay in the same place year after year, but the crops rotate each year. Each year, take a clean copy of the plan and fill it in and use the back of the plan to record notes. Keep each year's plan in a three-ring binder for easy cross-checking of varieties, rotations, etc.
- It is time to start thinking FRUIT TREE MAINTENANCE. Plan to prune your trees and apply dormant oil in the next couple of months.
- When spraying fruit trees, make sure that you spray the whole tree and not just the part that you can reach.

Tips on Rosemary Care in Winter

Overwintering Rosemary can be very difficult in our homes. Most homes are too warm and too dry. Rosemary likes a cool, humid environment with dry soil.

If you choose to keep yours indoors:

- Keep in direct light as much as possible. South or West exposure is best in the house.
- Set thermostats around 60 degrees F.
- Mist daily to keep the humidity increased around the foliage.



Many gardeners choose to keep Rosemary outdoors in the winter in pots and then bring them into the garage when temperature drop much below freezing.

Some keep them in garages or sheds all winter. Regardless of where you overwinter your plant, always let the soil dry out between waterings and give plenty of light.

Garden Myths

by Sarah Denkler

A garden myth is an idea that has persisted so long the origin is unknown and it is believed to be 100% true. By looking at reliable, researched based sources we can find out if these myths are 100% true or are based on a small percentage of accuracy.

Use vinegar to kill weeds instead of herbicide:

Vinegar is a popular substance used for organic control of weeds. To say that it will kill a weed, implying this can happen in one or two applications, is to provide more credit than is worthy of the myth. Vinegar is a mild acid, which will easily burn tender plant tissue back to the point where the soil

provides protection for the plant.

Given time the plant will regrow and another application of vinegar will be needed. Persistent reapplication of vinegar may, over time, use up enough of the plants energy that it is unable to reproduce new growth. This does not happen quickly, if at all, and does require diligence on the part of the person who is working to control the weed.



Why Use Missouri Natives

By Sarah Denkler

Perhaps the most often quoted reason for using natives is for their reduced maintenance. We would be remiss if we did not point out that this does not mean 'NO' maintenance.

Maintenance and resources are reduced through better drought tolerance, improved ability to grow in poor soils and through increased habitat.

Because native plants are already acclimatized to our area, they have adapted to the growing conditions here. This requires less water, fertilizer and time in application. Again, when severe drought occurs, these plants will require water.

What may be an unintentional benefit is added wildlife, such as birds, and habitat for beneficial insects. This ally in insect pest control on vegetables is used by commercial growers who work to use fewer or no insecticides. This is done by planting native plants that attract native insects.

A short list of natives that will attract bees for pollination include: Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) blooming in fall, Culer's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) with summer blooms, Cup plant



Coreopsis lanceolata attracts bees and other beneficial insects. Attractive blooms occur all summer.

(*Silphium perfoliatum*) blooming summer into fall, Goldenrods (*Solidago spp*) blooming late summer and fall, Joe-pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) with blooms late summer and fall, Lanceleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) which blooms spring and summer and Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias verticillata*) blooming in summer.

Dreaming of Sunflowers in January

by Katie Kammler

Sometimes the dreary, short, dark days of winter need brightening up. Seed catalogs have arrived in the mail so these days are perfect for daydreaming about the new growing season and hopes that it is better than the last. We don't normally think of sunflowers in January but they are cheerful enough to rid us of the winter blues.

There are many different types and colors of sunflowers now. Some bloom early in the season where others are later, into August and September. Many people think of the huge sunflowers that get 12 feet tall and have flowers that are a foot wide. If you



don't have space for something so big in your garden, think about growing some of the short varieties that only get a couple feet tall with multiple branches of flowers that bloom

throughout the season. Flower colors come in a range of the sunset from pale yellow to dark red. Sunflowers also make great cut flowers and are good for attracting birds to the garden.

So when a dark winter day gets you down, think of the summer sunflowers that you are going plant in the coming year and it is sure to warm up the coldest winter day.

Time To Update Your Subscription!

by Donna Aufdenberg



If you would like to continue to receive a hardcopy of the **Garden Spade Newsletter**, please fill out the form and enclose \$10.00 for your annual subscription. The \$10.00 covers printing and mailing costs associated with the newsletter.

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P.O. Box 19
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Planning For The Perfect Container Garden

by Donna Aufdenberg

Many combinations of plants can be grown successfully in containers. Container gardening can provide enjoyment with all types of annual flowers, perennial flowers, and decorative plants. We must keep in mind that just like in a garden, in order for garden plants to be productive, we must have a well drained growing medium, adequate water and fertilizer, and plenty of sunlight.

Select containers that are large enough to hold the plants and their root systems. Plastic pots, clay pots, buckets, wash tubs, wooden planters, or hanging baskets are just a few suggestions. Almost any kind of container can be used if it provides good drainage through holes in the bottom. If holes are needed, drill four or more holes evenly spaced around the bottom of the container.

The size of the container needed for a container garden depends on the plants you choose and the desired display you want. Most gardeners want a tall plant in the middle, a few fillers plant around the center, and trailing plants cascading over the edges. Pots smaller than a ten inch diameter are fine for smaller plantings or individual specimens such as herbs and short season varieties. For most plants and for the best display, the larger pots work better. The depth of the container is important. Soil 6 to 8 inches deep is the minimum for most plants.

Container gardens require a growing medium that is well drained but holds enough water to support the plants in the growing season. It is important to pick a light weight, soil-less growing mix. Avoid using garden soils that will have weed seeds and disease pathogens in it. Avoid using bagged "potting soil" because it tends to be heavy and hard to dry out and then hard as rocks when it does finally dry out. Soil-less potting mixes are free from weed seeds, disease organisms and are less likely to

compact, hold moisture and are light weight. The soil-less mixes can be expensive, so many gardeners fill about 1/4 to 1/3 way up the pot with an alternative material to take up some of the extra room in deep pots. Fillers can be packing peanuts, a pot with holes turned upside down, broken pottery, garden soil, compost or mulch. It is important that the top 8 to 12 inches of the pot is soil-less mix! This is where the plant roots will be.

When selecting a planting design, most gardeners follow the Thriller (main attraction), Filler (fluffy middle layer), and Spiller (trailing accents) scheme. Based on this planting design, the combinations are limitless. Some of the more common thrillers include dracaena spikes, cannas, grasses, coleus or angelonia. Some of the fillers used are verbena, geraniums, begonias, impatiens, vinca, and coral bells. The spillers can be plants like vinca vine, sweet potato vine, helichrysum, million bells or fan flower. There are many internet websites and garden guides that have neat designs and planter formulations for gardeners to use.

Sunlight is important for growing quality plants and produce. Nearly all plants need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight. Plants such as impatiens and begonias can tolerate more shade but still require some direct sun. Since the roots of the plants are limited and the soil mixes do not contain much minerals, it is essential that fertilizer be applied to the container soils. A soluble fertilizer (15-30-15 or 20-20-20) applied once a week is recommended. Slow release fertilizers can also be used and need to be applied two to three times during the growing season.

Plants grown in containers require frequent watering because they dry out quickly from sun and wind. Some plants may require daily watering. Water thoroughly so that the water can reach the



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bottom of the container and allow the excess to drain through the drainage holes. Do not let the soil dry out completely. This may cause the plants to wilt or drop their fruits and flowers. On the other hand, do not overwater. Water the soil and avoid getting the leaves wet. Wet leaves encourage

disease. Also, if you would trellis or stake the plant in the garden, then trellis or stake it in the container.

So get started looking through books, catalogs and the internet to get ideas for your next container garden and Happy Gardening!

Poinsettia Care after Christmas

by Alice Long, Madison County Master Gardener

Now that Christmas is over and the new year is beginning, a question often arises. What do I do now to care for my Poinsettia so that it will bloom next year. And the answer is NOT put it in the closet.

Your poinsettia is a tropical plant, brought to the US in 1828 by Joel Roberts Poinsett, an American botanist, physician and Minister to Mexico. Once discovering the plant, he sent cuttings from Mexico to his home in Charleston, South Carolina beginning the modern propagation of the plant.



Being that the Poinsettia is tropical, you will need to keep your poinsettia warm all winter away from drafts (this includes doors opening and shutting, heating vents, fans, etc.). Give your plant plenty of sunshine in the winter. When the weather is warm enough (after the treat of frost has passed), put your plant outside where it will receive morning sun and afternoon shade. Don't ever place it in all day hot sun.

The red leaves will eventually begin to fall off (no worries, this is a natural process). Once outside, you should see new green leaves begin to appear. If your plant stems starts to look too long and spindly, just simply pinch them back to give the plant a more full, bushy look. A white sap will appear when you pinch the plant back. Be sure that you wash your hands well if you should get it

on you since it can cause irritation to skin.

Fertilize the plant every 2 to 3 weeks and make sure to water it regularly. Never let it dry completely OR let it sit in water. Poinsettia roots are very delicate so sitting in water for even just a day can damage roots. (With the same thought, never drop your plant hard on the ground either.) Once root damage is done, it is usually irreversible.

After bringing the plant back indoors, from September 1 to November 15, your plant needs NO UNNATURAL LIGHT!!! This means that you will place it in a room where you will NOT be turning on a light after the sun goes down. (It will have complete darkness from sun down until the next morning.) Poinsettia leaves turn red based on the amount of sunlight they receive in a days time, so if they get more sunlight than normal, they will turn red later. The slightest amount of unnatural light in a day will cause you poinsettia to delay turning color, so watch where you place it at night (no window where a street light shines in and even car lights passing by can delay the turning of your poinsettia.

Once again, keep warm and water thoroughly but never let your poinsettia sit in water. Now, hopefully, once a year has passed, you will have a beautiful poinsettia to use in decorating for the holidays.

Vegetable Crop: Lettuce and Spinach

by Donna Aufdenberg

With the start of the garden season right around the corner, it is time to start working on planning those very early crops. There are many different lettuce and spinach varieties on the market these days and it leaves many of us pondering what will grow well in Missouri.

Greens do best in cool, spring temperatures and can provide quick crops. They need plenty of moisture for rapid germination and growth, as most are shallow rooted. For most, we can have a crop within 50-60 days.

Most of the guides promote planting lettuce and spinach at the beginning of March but in most years, when the winter weather is mild, we can actually plant in Mid-February in Southeast Missouri. Both can also be planted in the fall where it will overwinter to yield heavily the following spring.

When selecting a variety of **lettuce**, place close attention to days until maturity, color, growth habit, and heat tolerance.



There are four types of lettuce that are commonly grown in the home garden.

- Crispheads grow large, firm heads like iceberg lettuce. These are not recommended for Missouri due to these varieties needing a long, cool growing season. Some gardeners still try to grow Great Lakes, Summertime, and Ithaca.
- Butterhead varieties form small heads of tender leaves. Varieties for Missouri include Buttercrunch, Deer Tongue, Bibb, and Sangria.
- Leaf Lettuce types form loosely arranged leaves on stalks. These come in a number of color and leaf shape variations. Most leaf varieties can be used at any stage from a baby leaf stage at 30 days up until maturity at around 60 days. Green varieties for Missouri include Black

Seeded Simpson, Oak Leaf, Slobolt, Salad Bowl, and Tango. Red varieties include Prizehead, Red Sails, Ruby Red and Red Salad Bowl.

- Romaine form upright, loose bunches of leaves. Romaine types are more susceptible to heat-related problems such as tip burn than are leaf types. Varieties for Missouri include Cimmon, Green Towers, Paris Island, and Jericho.

Lettuce Planting Details:

- 0.25 ounce of seeds for 100 feet of row for direct seeding.
- 18 inches between rows and 6 inches between plants in a row
- Plant 0.25 inch deep
- 55 to 80 days from planting to eating stage depending on variety
- Planting dates for Southern Missouri - March 10 to April 20 and Aug. 1 to 20

There are several **Spinach** varieties with different textured leaved. They are described as smooth or savoy, which is wrinkled and curled. Planted in the spring, it is a 30-50 day crop. Smooth varieties include Giant Nobel and Olympia. Savoy or crinkled-leaf varieties include Bloomsdale Long Standing, Melody and Tye.



Photo from University of Mass. Extension

Spinach Planting Details:

- 1 ounce of seeds for 100 feet of row
- 18 inches between rows and 3 inches between plants in row
- Plant 0.25 inch deep
- 40 to 50 days from planting to eating stage
- Planting dates for Southern Missouri - March 10 to May 1 and Aug. 1 to 30



Group News - What's Happening

January 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
Happy New Year						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Parkland MG, 6:30pm @ Botkin Lumber Co. in Farmington Industrial Park			Ste. Genevieve MG Meeting, 6:30pm, at the Ste. Genevieve Co. Ext. Center		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
				Cape Girardeau Co MGs, 7pm, Cape Co. Ext. Center		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
	Perry Co. MG 6:30 pm, Perry Co. Ext. Center				Contact your local Extension Center if you have questions about any event on the calendar.	

February

- 4 - Parkland MGs 1st Monday at 6:30pm, Botkin Lumber CO, Frmgntn Industrial Park
- 5 - Poplar Bluff MGs 1st Tuesday at 6:30pm, PB Ext Center in Poplar Bluff
- 14 - Ste. Genevieve MGs 2nd Thursday, at Ste. Gen. County Ext. Center at 6:30pm
- 14 - Delta Area MGs 2nd Thursday at 7:00pm, Medical Arts Building, Sikeston, MO
- 21 - Cape Girardeau County MGs 3rd Thursday at Cape County Ext. Center at 7pm
- 25 - Perry County MGs 4th Monday at the Perry County Ext. Center at 6:30pm

Upcoming Events

- February 9 - Perry County Master Gardener Spring Symposium
- February 26 - Organic Vegetable Garden Program; Colton's Annex, Poplar Bluff, MO
- March 2 - Garden Symposium; Mineral Area College in Park Hills, MO
- March 9 - Cape Girardeau County Spring Symposium, Cape Girardeau, MO
- 2013 - Advanced Trainings and Tours

If you have a horticultural related event for the calendar call 573-686-8064 to add it.

Editor's Corner

The Garden Spade is published monthly by University of Missouri Extension staff for individuals and families living in Southeast and East Central Missouri. This newsletter is provided by your local extension council.

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 Extension

We welcome and encourage Master Gardener groups and individuals to submit items to the newsletter. We encourage the submission of any news such as upcoming volunteer opportunities, community events related to gardening, warm wishes or congratulations to fellow gardeners. We also encourage Master Gardeners sharing experiences and writing articles on timely topics.

All entries into the group news sections must be received by 4:30 on the 15th of each month for the following months news.

Email News to: kammlerk@missouri.edu, denklers@missouri.edu, or aufdenbergd@missouri.edu

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