HOME

- Check spring flowering bulbs you set aside for forcing. After 12 to 15 weeks in the cold, they can be brought indoors to bloom in 2 to 4 weeks.
- If you plan to keep your holiday plants, they will need care.
- Get starting trays, lights and starting mix together with whatever you will need next month for seed starting.
- Keep holiday poinsettias and other plants near a bright window. Water as top of soil becomes dry.
- Increase humidity around houseplants by grouping plants together, placing them on a pebble-water tray or running a humidifier.
- Check stored produce and tender flower bulbs and roots for rot, shriveling or excess moisture. Remove and discard damaged material.
- Repot houseplants as they outgrow current pots.

YARD

- Check young trees for rodent injury on lower trunks. Prevent injury with hardware cloth or protective collars.
- Keep road and sidewalk salt away from plants. Construct a screen of burlap, if necessary, to keep salt spray off plants.
- "Leaf" through nursery catalogs and make plans for landscape and home orchard additions. Order plants early for best selection.
- Early spring-flowering trees and shrubs, such as forsythia, crabapple, flowering quince, flowering dogwood and honeysuckle, can be forced for early indoor blooms by placing cut branches in water in a warm location.

GARDEN

- Seed catalogs are arriving in abundance. Read them and make tentative selections.
  - Sketch your garden plans on paper, including what to grow, spacing, arrangement and number of plants needed.
  - Order seeds and plants as early as possible for best selection.
  - Wood ashes from the fireplace can be spread in the garden, but don't overdo it. Wood ashes increase soil pH, and excess application can make some nutrients unavailable for plant uptake. Have soil tested to be certain of the pH before adding wood ash.
HOME
- Check stored produce and flower bulbs for rot, shriveling or excess moisture. Discard damaged material.
- Check houseplants soil for dryness before watering. Move to brighter windows, if needed.

YARD
- Force branches of forsythia and pussy willow to flower indoors by placing them in water.
- Choose appropriate species and cultivars of plants, and begin drawing landscaping plans.
- Check mulches, rodent shields, salt/wind screens and other winter plant protection to make sure they are still in place.
- Prune landscape plants, except early spring bloomers, which should be pruned after flowers fade. Birches, maples, dogwoods and other heavy sap bleeders can be pruned in early summer to avoid the sap flow, although bleeding is not harmful to the tree.
- Fruit trees also should be pruned now.

GARDEN
- If you have clumps of new ornamental grasses to transplant and the ground has thawed enough, plant them now to give them an early start on the new season’s growth.
- Find sources of manure early. It should age before being used as a side dressing or soil amendment in the garden.
- Test the viability of last year’s left-over seeds. Discard those that have too low a germination percentage.
- The indoor seed-starting season traditionally begins on Valentine’s Day, February 14 and runs to St. Patrick’s Day, March 17.
- Get your cold frame ready and plant a row of leaf lettuce for some early garden fresh greens.
- Prepare or repair lawn and garden tools for the upcoming season.

February 2014

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HOME
- Fertilize houseplants as new growth appears.
- Start garden seeds indoors for transplanting outdoors later in spring.
- Check stored bulbs and produce for decay; discard damaged items.
- Prune, repot and clean houseplants as needed.

YARD
- Prune trees and shrubs, except those that bloom early in spring, while plants are still dormant.
- Plant new trees and shrubs as soon as soil dries enough to be worked. Plant bare-root plants before they leaf out.
- Fertilize woody plants before new growth begins, but after soil temperatures have reached 40F.
- Remove winter coverings from roses as soon as new growth begins. Prune and fertilize as needed.
- Apply superior oil spray to control scale insects and mites when tips of leaves start to protrude from buds.

GARDEN
- Plant cool-season vegetables and flowers as soon as the ground has dried enough to work.
- Gradually harden off transplants by setting them outdoors during the daytime for about a week before planting.
- Follow last fall's soil test recommendations for fertilizer and pH adjustment. It's not too late to test soil if you missed last year.
- Start seeds of warm-season vegetables and flowers indoors. Transplant to the garden after danger of frost is past.
- Watch for blooms of early spring bulbs, such as daffodils, squill, crocus, dwarf iris and snowdrops.
  - Remove old asparagus and rhubarb tops, and sidedress the plants with nitrogen or manure. Plant or transplant asparagus, rhubarb and small fruit plants.
  - Remove winter mulch from strawberry beds as soon as new growth begins, but keep the mulch nearby to protect against frost and freezes.
  - Remove weak, diseased or damaged canes from raspberry plants before new growth begins.
  - Prune grapevines.

March 2014

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HOME
Houseplants and overwintering tropicals can be trimmed, repotted and fertilized.

YARD
- Mow lawn to 2 inches removing no more than 1/3 of leaf blade at any one mowing.
- Establish or renovate turf by seed or sod, if needed.
- If appropriate, apply herbicides. Read and follow all label directions.
- Reduce thatch if more than ½ inch by using core aerifiers or vertical mowers.
- Continue planting trees and shrubs, fruit trees, grapes and brambles such as raspberry and blackberry.
- Prune spring flowering shrubs such as forsythia soon after bloom. Use renewal pruning by removing oldest stems at soil level. Prune summer and fall blooming clematis.
- Examine trees and shrubs for winter injury. Prune out and remove all dead and diseased wood.
- Fertilize if not done in fall and if soil test or reduced growth indicates need.

GARDEN
Average last frost date is mid-April. For tender plants such as impatiens, basil, tomatoes, and tropical wait until after May 10 before planting.
- Begin planting and dividing most perennials except bearded iris and peony.
- Plant pansies and hardy annuals.
- Finish pulling back mulch from around perennials and roses.
- Plant bare root plants before they leaf out. Soak plants in warm water for 2 hours before planting.
- Cut down ornamental and native grasses ground before growth starts.
  - Add compost to garden. If needed, till garden when soil permits. Do not work when soil is too wet.
  - Plant seeds of frost tolerant plants such as spinach, lettuce, carrot, beet, chard, parsnip and radish.
  - Plant or divide rhubarb. Plant asparagus crowns.
  - Plant strawberries. Pinch off first year flowers to encourage strong root systems.
GENERAL

- Practice good sanitation.
- Mulch with organic mulches such as wood chips to reduce weeding and conserve moisture.
- Be sure to read, understand, and follow all pesticide label directions.
- Begin scouting for pests such as scale and spring insects.

YARD

- Finish any lawn seeding. Fertilize your lawn with one pound actual N per 1000 square feet.
- Apply broadleaf weed control to lawn to control broadleaf weeds such as dandelions.
- Prune spring flowering shrubs after blooming. Pinch azalea and rhododendron blossoms as they fade. Fertilize after bloom with fertilizer for acid-loving plants.
- Continue control of insects and diseases on fruit trees.

GARDEN

- Houseplants can be moved outside when nights remain above 50ºF.
- Let spring flowering bulb foliage turn yellow before removing.
- Plant annual seeds and transplants when danger of frost is past.
- Plant tropical water lilies when water temperature is over 55º F.
- Set flower supports early and let plants grow through them.
- Pinch top 1-2 inches of new growth on chrysanthemums.
- Remove winter-killed stems on roses.
- Pick strawberries. Remove any rotten fruit to reduce picnic beetle populations.
  - Mid-May plant sweet corn, squash, tomatoes, eggplant, sweet potato, and other warm loving crops.
  - Thin carrots and beets to allow root development.
GENERAL
- Mulch to control weeds and conserve soil moisture after soil has warmed.
- Keep weeds controlled. They're easier to pull when they are still young.
- Supplement natural rainfall to supply a total of 1 to 1.5 inches of water per week for lawns and gardens.
- Check plants in baskets and pots. They may need daily watering.

YARD
- Raise lawn mowing height of cool season grasses to at least 2 ½ inches for summer.
- Continue pruning spring-flowering shrubs after blooms fade.
- Remove faded flowers and seed pods on lilac and other spring-flowering shrubs.
- Watch for bagworms, especially on junipers and arborvitae.
- Spray susceptible roses with a fungicide to prevent black spot disease.
- Apply balanced rose fertilizer after first bloom is past. Cut spent rose blooms just above the first five-leaflet leaf for fastest return bloom.
- Thin apples so fruits are seven to nine inches apart.

GARDEN
- Plant pumpkin seeds early in the month to be ready for Halloween.
- Continue planting carrots, beans and sweet corn.
- For staked tomatoes, remove branches that form where the leaf joins the stem while they are 1 to 1.5 inches long to allow easier training.
- Start indoor seedling of broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower for fall harvest.
- Continue harvest of spring plantings of broccoli, cabbage and peas. Remove cool-season plants, such as radish, spinach and lettuce, as they bolt, or form seed stalks, during hot summer weather.
- Remove dead flowers from annuals and perennials. Pinch shoot tips of chrysanthemums, impatiens, petunias and coleus for bushier growth.
- Protect ripening raspberries and blackberries from birds by covering with netting.
GENERAL
- Control weeds before going to seed
- Water plants if not receiving at least one inch of water per week. Water deeply and thoroughly. Avoid light sprinkling.
- Monitor for insects and diseases.
- Remove any stagnant water to avoid mosquito problems. Use Bti sold as Mosquito Dunks or Mosquito Preventer in rain barrels or other standing water.
- Add organic mulches such as wood chips to bare areas in the garden.

YARD
- Mow and water as necessary. Raise mowing height to 2 ½-3 inches when above 85F.
- Treat for grubs depending on product and past pest history. Some products such as imidacloprid and halofenozide need to be applied in July in order to be active when the grubs are start feeding.
- Water newly planted trees and shrubs including those planted within the last 5 years.
- Scout for fall webworm nest building near ends of branches. Prune off infested branches or use Btk products such as Dipel or Thuricide.
- If present, treat now for bagworms on evergreens. Look up. They often feed in the tops of trees. Btk will also work on bagworms.
- Hot, dry weather is ideal for spider mite development. Forceful water sprays or insecticidal soap are effective controls.
- Prune out and destroy old fruiting canes of raspberries after harvest.

GARDEN
- Keep beans, cucumbers and other crops harvested so plants remain productive. Plant more beans, beets, and carrots.
  - Pull up garlic bulbs when the tops start to yellow and dry.
  - Scout for tomato hornworm on tomatoes and peppers.
  - Late in the month divide and transplant iris as needed.
  - Fertilizer container plants every two weeks.
  - Mulch and Keep soil moisture constantly even to avoid blossom-end rot of tomatoes and peppers occurs when soil moisture is uneven. Water when soils begin to dry.
- Continue deadheading. If petunias look leggy, trim back to 6-8 inches, water and fertilize for renewed growth.

July 2014

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HOME
- Take cuttings from plants such as impatiens, coleus, geraniums and wax begonias to overwinter indoors.
- Order spring-flowering bulbs for fall planting.
- Cut flowers from the garden to bring a little color indoors or to dry for use later.

YARD
- If rains are not adequate, apply 1 to 1.5 inches of water every 7 to 10 days as a gentle, thorough soaking.
- Don't fertilize woody plants now. It stimulates late growth that will not have time to harden off properly before winter.
- Prune out and destroy the raspberry and blackberry canes that bore fruits this year.

GARDEN
- Temperatures above 90 F often leads to poor fruit set in most vegetable crops; upper 90s will stop fruit set in nearly all crops.
- Keep the garden well watered during dry weather and free of weeds, insects and disease.
- Harvest onions and potatoes after the tops yellow and fall, then cure them in a warm, dry, well-ventilated area. The necks should be free of moisture when fully cured, in about a week's time.
- Pick beans, tomatoes, peppers and squash often to encourage further production.
  - Harvest sweet corn and watermelon when ripe.
  - Keep faded flowers pinched off bedding plants to promote further flowering and improve plant appearance.

**August 2014**

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GENERAL
- Pull all weeds before seeds mature.
- Control poison ivy before it goes dormant.
- Inspect, clean and prune houseplants before bringing back indoors.

YARD
- Fertilize lawns on Labor Day.
- Reseed bare patches, or renovate large areas as needed – August 15 to September 15 is the best time to renovate.
- If necessary, apply herbicides for broad leaf weed control. Follow label directions.
- Do not prune or fertilize trees or shrubs at this time.
- Pick off bagworms when you see them.
- Begin to rake leaves as they fall.
- Keep newly planted trees, shrubs and evergreens watered and mulched.
- Prune out raspberry canes that fruited this past year.

GARDEN
- Clean up garden and remove diseased plants. Compost healthy plant debris.
- Dig finished compost into garden.
- Dry herbs for the winter months.
- Plant fall lettuces and greens.
- Record past season garden plan so crop rotation can be successful next season. Record problem areas.
- If fusarium and verticillium have been problems on tomatoes, record varieties and try different, resistant varieties next year.
- Start fall garden cleanup. Remove dead annuals. Start digging up summer flowering bulbs and properly storing them for winter.
  - Plant peonies. Divide daylilies, iris, peonies and other perennials.
HOME
- Keep poinsettia in total darkness for 15 hours each day for eight to 10 weeks until red bracts begin to show.
- Pot spring-flowering bulbs to force into bloom indoors.
- Acclimate houseplants grown outdoors during the summer to indoor growing conditions.
- Water indoor plants less frequently, and discontinue fertilizer as growth slows.

YARD
- Continue to mow if needed. Fertilize lawns around Thanksgiving, after mowing has ceased. Lime if soil test indicates the need.
- Rake and compost fallen leaves.
- Keep watering perennials, trees, shrubs, and especially evergreens until the ground freezes.
- Fertilize trees and shrubs after leaves have fallen.
- Protect tender evergreens with burlap screens or anti-desiccants.
- Wrap the trunks of young smooth-barked trees against sunscald or frost cracking. Be sure to remove in the spring.
- Apply barriers to control rabbit and mouse damage, if needed.
- Apply rose protection after leaves drop and soil is near freezing.
- Apply winter mulch to strawberry plants when plants are dormant but before temperatures drop below 20F.

GARDEN
- Plant garlic and shallots.
- Collect and save seeds from heirloom or favorite varieties.
- Harvest remaining vegetables, horseradish roots, pumpkins and squash before frost. Store in a cool location until ready to use.
- Harvest mature, green tomatoes before frost, and ripen indoors in the dark. Warmer temperatures lead to faster ripening.
- If asparagus has rust, prune off foliage after frost. If healthy, it can stay on until spring.
  - Remove plant debris from the garden and compost debris.
  - Have garden soil tested for fertilizer needs every 3-5 years.
  - Dig tender, garden flower bulbs for winter storage.
  - Complete planting of spring-flowering bulbs.
  - If overwintering planted containers, either move to area that won’t freeze or mulch entire container.

October 2014

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GENERAL

- Put up additional feeders; add a heater to a bird bath to accommodate the birds’ winter needs.
- Take steps to prevent garden pools from freezing solid in winter.
- Continue dark treatment for poinsettias. Keep in complete darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. daily until early December or until red bracts begin to show.

YARD

- Continue mowing lawn as needed.
- Apply winter lawn fertilizer in early November to keep lawns green into winter and boost early spring recovery.
- Protect the trunks of young fruit trees to prevent rodent damage.
- Spray sensitive evergreens with anti-desiccant to protect against damage from dry winds.
- After the ground has frozen, mulch or apply winter protection to roses and perennials.
- Remove dead, diseased or damaged branches.
- If you are planning to order a "live" Christmas tree, prepare its planting hole before the soil freezes. Mulch the area heavily to prevent freezing, or dig the hole and put fill in a protected, nonfreezing area such as a garage or basement.
- Clean up and discard fallen leaves and fruits around fruit plants to reduce disease carryover.

GARDEN

- Dig parsnips, Jerusalem artichokes and horseradish for the table and for cool storage.
- If frost hasn’t taken your garden yet, continue harvesting.
  - Remove crop and weed plant debris from the garden and add to the compost pile.
  - Fall tilling, except in erosion-prone areas, helps improve soil structure and usually leads to soils warming and drying faster in the spring. This allows crops to be planted earlier.
  - Dig and store tender flowering bulbs, and keep in a protected location.
  - Complete planting of spring-flowering bulbs until the ground is frozen.
HOME

- Clean and store hoses and flower pots.
- Store leftover garden chemicals where they will stay dry, unfrozen and out of the reach of children, pets and unsuspecting adults.
- Clean dirt and rust off garden tools by wiping clean metal surfaces with an oily rag, and then storing the tools in a dry location.
- Leave Christmas cactus in cool location for as long as possible to promote bud set.
- Check houseplant leaves for brown, dry edges, which indicate too little relative humidity in the house. Increase humidity by running a humidifier, grouping plants or using pebble trays.
- When shopping for a Christmas tree, check for green, flexible, firmly held needles and a sticky trunk base - both indicators of freshness. Make a fresh cut, and keep the cut end under water at all times.
- Trims evergreens, except pines and spruce, for a fresh supply of holiday greenery.

YARD

- Do necessary pruning after trees and shrubs have become dormant.
- Protect from extensive snow loads by tying their stems together with twine. Carefully remove heavy snow loads with a broom to prevent limb breakage.
- Protect broadleaves, evergreens or other tender landscape plants from excessive drying (desiccation) by winter sun and wind. Canvas, burlap or polyethylene plastic screens to the south and west protect the plants. Similarly, shield plants from salt spray on the street side.
- Check fruit trees for mouse damage and respond with appropriate traps and/or poisons.

GARDEN

- Order seed catalogs. When they arrive, dream about your garden next summer.
- Check on fruit and vegetables in cool storage. Remove any that show signs of spoiling.
Visit http://web.extension.illinois.edu/fmpt/ for a staff listing and more information on our programs.

Interactive Garden Calendar available at http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gardencal

Material obtained from:
Purdue Gardening News at www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/news_stories.html
University of Illinois Extension at www.extension.illinois.edu

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Main Office (Tazewell County)
1505 Valle Vista
Pekin, IL 61554
Phone: 309-347-6614
FAX: 309-347-5472
Email: uie-fmpt@illinois.edu
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm (Closed 12 - 1pm)

Branch Office (Fulton County)
15411 N IL 100 Highway
Lewistown, IL 61542
Phone: 309-547-3711
FAX: 309-547-3713
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm (Closed 12 - 1pm)

Branch Office (Mason County)
127 S High St, Ste 1
Havana, IL 62644
Phone: 309-543-3308
FAX: 309-543-6239
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm (Closed 12 - 1pm)

Branch Office (Peoria County)
4810 North Sheridan
Peoria, IL 61614
Phone: 309-685-3140
FAX: 309-685-3397
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm (Closed 12 - 1pm)