

WEGMAN'S NURSERY DECEMBER GARDEN TIPS



HOLIDAY SEASON TREES AND PLANTS

Don't forget to reserve your Christmas tree delivery date now by calling (650) 368-5908.

**Sorry, but we cannot choose a tree for you.
We have found from experience that selecting a tree
is too personal a decision
and should be left to the customer.**

The Holiday Season is upon us. There is barely time to take down the fall decorations from the front door and replace them with a suitable holiday wreath! Readymade **noble fir wreaths** from 12" to 36" in diameter are now available and can be decorated to your specifications or we'll be happy to dress the wreath with a complimentary red bow. Special bows in many fabrics and widths are also available for purchase.

An outstanding selection of **silver tip** and **noble fir Christmas trees** are available sizes range from three feet to 14 feet tall. Some sizes are in short supply. Pick out your tree and arrange for us to deliver when you specify. We also have **Gunnard Christmas Tree Stands** available which include installation for as long as you own the stand. Did you know Christmas trees are graded 1, 2, and 3? Our trees are ALL grade 1 of course!

See one of our [Christmas Tree Care Guides](#) for keeping your Christmas tree fresh.



Poinsettias this year come in a spectacular array of colors and sizes. We have 'points' in four-inch up to 12-inch containers. Colors range from the traditional bright red to pink, burgundy, spotted white on red, and a red and yellow blend. With proper care, these plants will last for a month indoors and two to four months on the front porch or balcony. Care for them as you would any potted plant. Pick up a [Poinsettia Care Guide](#) with your plant or look here online.

In addition to poinsettias, consider cyclamen for a prominent place at the front door, porch or balcony. Cyclamen will continue to bloom until March. And for a truly outstanding display, put a five-gallon Sasanqua Camellia 'Yuletide' in a suitable pot next to the entrance. Other festive plants include flowering kale or cabbage and pots of paperwhites or amaryllis.



December Gardening Tips from the Wegman's Professionals...

Did you remember to give your peaches and nectarines their first spraying to prevent peach leaf curl? By the end of December, it will be time for the second spray. Use four tablespoons of **Monterey Liqui-Cop®** plus six tablespoons of **Master Nursery® Pest Fighter Year-Round Spray Oil (Horticultural Oil)** in one gallon of water. If you missed the first spray, do it now. Shake your tree(s) vigorously before spraying to remove as many leaves as possible.



Plant spring-blooming bulbs now. If you grow them indoors, paperwhite narcissus bulbs take about four to six weeks to bloom. To prevent plants from looking leggy, start bulbs outdoors in a sunny location. You can start bulbs in either soil or gravel. When foliage has reached two to three inches tall, bring indoors and place in a window or a porch with full sun. Once buds begin to develop, you can place narcissus anywhere in the house. University experiments have found that if you empty the water from your container after roots are about one inch long and replace the water with a diluted alcohol solution (seven parts of water to one part of 80-proof gin or vodka) the stems will be reduced by one-quarter to one-third. Be careful—the only toddy they like is gin or vodka, no bourbon, wine or beer, please! See our [Paperwhites Care Guide](#) for more information.

Watering and Irrigation

Until we have a good overall rain, (1-1/2 or more inches) stay on your regular irrigation schedule. When the rains begin, turn off all your automatic systems. If there is no rain for two weeks, resume your regular schedule.

Vegetables and Annuals

Soaker hoses work great for vegetable gardens and annual beds. Run them once a week for four or five hours. Turn pressure on until you count one drip every three or four seconds along the entire line. If you see a spray four to six or more inches high, you have too much pressure or a broken hose.

Deciduous Trees and Shrubs

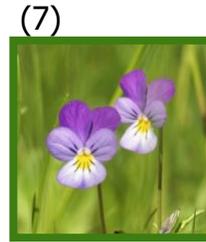
Let deciduous plants go dry until spring.

Mulches

When all your trees, shrubs and vegetables have been planted or cared for, they should be mulched. We recommend an organic product such as **Master Nursery® Gold Rush**, **Master Nursery® Bumper Crop**, **Gardner & Bloome® Soil Conditioner** or similar material. These products gradually work into the soil and become amendments. The mulches should be two to four inches deep and should be kept about four inches away from the trunks of trees or shrubs. Don't forget to water the plant beds under the eaves of the house where the rain never hits.

Annuals

Continue planting winter annuals. For shady spots, try (1) Cineraria, (2) English Primrose, (3) Fairy Primrose, (4) Primula Obconica, (5) Cyclamen, (6) Larkspur, and (7) Violas. For sunny spots, plant (8) Snapdragons, (9) Stock, (10) Pansies, (11) Iceland Poppies, (12) Flowering Kale and Cabbage (13) Alyssum, (14) Sweet Peas, (15) Bachelor's Buttons, (16) Calendula, and (17) Dianthus.



Don't forget to apply **Monterey Sluggo®** or **Deadline®** after planting annuals. Watch for slug and snail damage as winter progresses and continue to bait as needed. Use **Monterey Sluggo®** if children or animals are part of your household. Deadline is most effective but also most poisonous especially to animals and people.

Bulbs



Continue planting spring-blooming bulbs through the end of the month. Remember to refrigerate tulips and hyacinths for six to eight weeks before planting. Also, in our warm California climate, tulips and hyacinths behave as annuals and are discarded in spring. Many people plant them in pots for easy relocation and disposal.



Spray **Bonide® MoleMAX® Mole & Vole Repellent** to keep gophers away from tulip and hyacinth bulbs. Follow instructions exactly for best results. All daffodils, other narcissi, and Dutch iris are gopher, deer and rodent proof.

Remember to amend soil with **Master Nursery® Gold Rush** and to broadcast **Master Nursery® Bulb Food** when planting. You can also add **Master Nursery® Bulb Food** to individual bulb holes. The general rule of thumb for the depth of the hole is three times the length of the bulb and usually the pointed end up. If you plan to give bulbs as gifts, buy them as soon as possible and store them in the fridge either gift-wrapped or in paper bags. Keep bulbs away from

fruit including tomatoes and never store them in plastic bags. Read more on paperwhites and how to keep their stems shorter in the December Garden Tips *above*.

We have learned that all the narcissus family (daffodils, etc.) live longer and don't rot if they are planted in an area that does not get summer water (May to October).

Fruits



Potted blueberries will arrive this month. If you are planting them for the first time, be sure to read the [Growing Blueberries Care Guide](#) to get the sun, soil and irrigation properly prepared for these special plants.

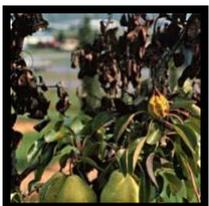
All deciduous fruit trees can be pruned and sprayed any time after mid-December and until the end of January. If the tree is holding its leaves, hit it with a strong stream of water to knock most of them off. You can use the same spray on all the fruit trees. As for the peach trees, use four tablespoons of **Monterey Liqui-Cop®** and six tablespoons of the **Master Nursery® Pest Fighter Year-Round Spray Oil (Horticultural Oil)** in one gallon of water.



Flowering fruit trees such as flowering plum or flowering cherry are not to be pruned until after they bloom but spray anytime after all the leaves drop.



If peach or nectarine trees were infected with peach leaf curl during past seasons, you should spray three times during the dormant season with a copper product. The second spray should occur this month. Use **Monterey Liqui-Cop®** and **Master Nursery® Pest Fighter Year-Round Spray Oil** at the end of December. The third spray should be at the end of January. Prune your tree before the last spray. Research at UC Davis proves that copper and Chlorothalonil are the most effective control against peach leaf curl and that organic fungicides and growing season controls are ineffective. Use four tablespoons of **Monterey Liqui-Cop®** and six tablespoons of the **Master Nursery® Year-Round Spray Oil** in one gallon of water.



Fire blight appears as blackened (shown) crooked stem tips and most commonly affects pears. It also can affect Pyracantha, apples, Photinia or loquat, and some other plants in the rose family. To control, cut 9 to 12 inches below affected tissue and discard. *Do not compost.* Then spray as directed in the [Apple and Pear Care Guide](#). Do not confuse with bacterial blast.



Check, and if necessary, spray apple and pear trees for woolly apple aphid, now. They appear as a white cottony substance, usually in crevices, pruning cuts and on the roots close to the base of the tree.



Check citrus for snail damage and for scale. Scale is a sucking insect that usually clusters along fruit stems, new growth and the undersides of leaves. If scale is found, spray tree with **Master Nursery® Pest Fighter Year-Round Spray Oil** and again two weeks later. Don't use the year-round spray oil more than four times during the growing season. Wait at least two weeks between applications. Snail damage will be accompanied by slime tracks around and on the tree. Scale will usually be signalled by ants running up and down the tree trunk.



The Citrus Leaf Miner (*Phyllocnistis citrella*) has become common in the Bay Area. The larvae (maggot) feed on the soft growth between the upper and lower layers of leaves on new growth. As it feeds, it leaves a tunnel (mine) filled with fecal material, visible when the leaf is held up to strong light. This feeding may cause the leaf to curl and fall off. Only very young trees may experience a reduction in growth. Mature leaves are too tough for the leaf miner to penetrate. Cutting off the infected leaves and biweekly spraying with insecticides is largely cosmetic. The University of California recommends leaving the affected leaves alone and letting the natural enemies of leaf miners feed on and parasitize the maggots inside the mines. Most insecticides are not effective and leave residues which kill natural enemies.

Have your pruning tools cleaned, sharpened and "tuned up" with our service in preparation for the pruning season.

Groundcovers



For the bold and fearless gardener, knotweed (*Persicaria capitata*, *Polygonum*) is a possible groundcover for confined space. It is evergreen, 3" to 6" tall, has round, pink flower heads which bloom almost all year round and attracts honeybees. Needs little or no irrigation in full to partial sun but will become invasive in the regular garden.

To ward off slugs and snails, bait with **Monterey Sluggo®** (safe for pets and people) or **Deadline®** (toxic to pets and people). Wait until February to mow low-growing groundcovers such as ivy and periwinkle. If we get a normal rainfall, this is the best time of the year to start new or more groundcover.

Lawns

For those of you saving your lawn, stay on top of watering your lawn until the rains begin strongly and regularly. Ideally, lawns should be watered once or twice a week for one-half hour to encourage deep root systems. As soon as the rains begin, turn systems off. If water runs off your lawn soon after starting to apply water, follow the 5 minute rule: water

for five minutes, wait one-half to one hour and then water another five minutes, wait another one-half to one hour and repeat until you have watered a total of 25 to 30 minutes. Then have the lawn aerated next spring.

Once the rain begins and conditions are moist, bluegrass lawns may show yellowing or spots of yellow associated with rust. This should disappear in spring.

Set mower blades to 1-½ to 2 inches for fescue and bluegrass lawns, and 1-½ inches for Bermuda grass lawns. Consider leaving lawn clippings on the lawn. As clippings break down, they provide the lawn with nutrients, reducing the need for fertilizers by 30-50%. Clippings will not cause thatch. If you leave clippings on the lawn, fertilize only every other month.

Continue monthly feedings with **Master Nursery® Fall & Winter Feed for Lawns** which contains a fast-acting nitrate fertilizer which works well in winter.

If you have had problems with weedy grasses and other annual weeds in your lawn or flower beds, now is the time to apply **Concern® All-Natural Weed Prevention Plus**, which contains a pre-emergent that targets weedy grasses and other annual weeds. **Concern® All-Natural Weed Prevention Plus** is corn gluten organic with 8-2-4 fertilizer and is non-toxic to pets and children. **Master Nursery® Pre-Emergent Weed Preventer & Lawn Food** can also be used. None of these products will eliminate established weeds. Apply again in February. *Remember: You cannot use pre-emergent products for 3-4 months prior to seeding a lawn, laying sod or planting the area with annuals.*

Apply **Monterey CRAB-E-Rad™ Plus** now and in February to get rid of crabgrass and many established weeds.

If lawns show raccoon or lawn moth damage, apply **BioAdvanced™ Grub Control**. Lawn moth damage appears as scattered dead spots throughout the lawn, and raccoon damage appears as torn spots in the lawn. Although it is too late to use **Orcon Organic Control Beneficial Nematodes**, consider applying them next April and July. **Orcon Organic Control Beneficial Nematodes** are microscopic organisms which consume various destructive soil-dwelling insects. They do not harm earthworms and are safe around pets and people.



We have recently learned that plants native to Australia (1) Acacia, (2) Eucalyptus, (3) Grevillea, (4) Correa, etc., can be harmed by fertilizers high in phosphorus. (It's the second number on the fertilizer bag). Try **E.B. Stone™ Cottonseed Meal** (6-2-1).

Perennials

Deciduous perennials can be cut back as soon as they go dormant.



Cut back evergreen perennials such as (1) Penstemon, (2) Chrysanthemums, (3) Lavender and (4) Salvias now or into mid-January. If cutting back your perennials leaves unsightly gaps in your flower beds, fill in the blank spaces with some of the previously listed annuals. Cutting back your evergreens keeps them compact and dense and the new growth lends a fresh appearance. *Caution*—don't cut so far back that you have only bare wood showing or the plant may not come back. This is especially true for lavender.

Ornamental grasses can be cut back now. If you enjoy the ornamental effect of the dried seed heads through the winter months, wait until Valentine's Day to cut them back. Bermuda grass is dormant now and chemical control is *not* effective.

Bait perennials with **Monterey Sluggo®** or **Deadline®**.

Roses

Despite our mixed weather, hold off pruning roses until January. Stop deadheading now to promote dormancy. Do not fertilize roses until next spring (about Valentine's Day).

Bare-root roses should be ready for sale in January.

Shrubs & Vines



As camellias begin blooming, you may notice brown spotting on petal margins of open flowers, partly open flowers and flower buds. These are characteristic symptoms of camellia petal blight, a fungus for which no cure exists. The key to sanitation is for reducing the disease: remove infected flowers and buds and try not to let infected petals hit the ground. If they do, gather and place in trash immediately; do not compost.



Azalea flower blight has similar symptoms but can be controlled with a fungicide such as **Bonide®Fung-onil™**. For best results spray before the buds show color.

(1)



(2)



(3)



To promote bud development in (1) Rhododendrons, (2) Japonica Camellias and (3) Azaleas fertilize now with **Master Nursery® Master Bloom** (0-10-10). Camellia exhibitors apply a very light sprinkling of **E.B. Stone™ Organics Blood Meal** at this time of the year.

(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)



(7)



Hardy shrubs such as (1) Rosemary, (2) Escallonia, (3) Abelia, (4) Common Myrtle, (5) Texas Privet, (6) Star Jasmine and (7) Pittosporum can be pruned now or in early spring.



Hydrangeas and wisteria are a bit tricky to prune. Check our [Hydrangeas](#) and [Wisteria](#) Care Guides. You can also consult [Sunset's Western Garden Book](#) or one of the pruning supplements for additional information. Hold off pruning hydrangeas until January and never prune back below the lowest first or second set of side buds.

Hydrangeas should have received their first application of [Aluminum Sulphate](#) to stimulate blue color or [Agricultural Lime](#) to stimulate pink color. Repeat during the months of December, January and February.

(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



Wait until February to prune tender shrubs and vines such as (1) Pink Jasmine, (2) Potato Vine, (3) Bougainvillea, (4) Citrus, and (5) Fuchsia.



Spring-blooming shrubs such as forsythia and camellias are pruned after they bloom.

Trees

Look for broken and torn branches after storms. Prune to healthy tissue, using heading cuts if parts of branches have been broken or torn and removing entire branches if necessary. Consulting a simple informative book will help you determine where to prune and how to make the proper cut. If severe damage is done to older, mature trees, we strongly encourage you to seek the services of a certified arborist. While you may pay more for their work than you would for a noncertified tree pruner, you can be assured that the health and longevity of your trees will not be compromised by poor practices such as topping and incorrect pruning cuts.

Wegman's has many living conifers for sale currently. While most people use them as living Christmas trees, now is an ideal time to plant them. Winter's cool, moist conditions assist conifers to become established more readily than at other times of the year. **Click here for our [Live Christmas Tree Care Guide](#)**. Remember that **Live Christmas Trees cannot be indoors more than 5 to 7 days** or they will stop being alive!

Be sure to dispose of leaves infected with powdery mildew in trash bins. *Do not compost!* Most of our home compost piles reach sufficient temperatures to break down food and yard waste but they seldom reach sufficient temperatures (140°F+) required to destroy harmful fungi and bacteria.



In both San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, the olive fruit fly has infested olive trees, rendering fruit unusable for home curing. If you're thinking of home curing olives, be sure to have fruit checked for maggots. Next March, hang **Monterey Olive Fruit Fly Trap & Lure** to capture the first adults so you can start your spray schedule. See our [Olive Care Guide](#) for further information.

Vegetables

Keep planting winter vegetables from starts. Plant the cole crops (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, and Brussels sprouts) from starts through December to extend your harvest through late spring. Cole crops flavour better in cool to cold conditions. These crops and others such as lettuce, spinach, bok choy, chard, cilantro, and peas can be planted at two- or three-week intervals to give a longer continuous harvest rather than one of super abundance. See our [Winter Vegetable Gardening Care Guide](#) for additional information.

Plant garlic from bulbs and onions from starts. The onions available at Wegman's from starts are Walla Walla Sweets, early red burger, early yellow, Solano white and red torpedo. See our [Garlic and Onion Care Guide](#) for planting information.

Ideas for special situations...

(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



Pull containerized tender and tropical plants (hardy to 25-30°F) close to the house for protection during the cold months. If hard frosts are expected, cover all tender and tropical plants that are planted in the ground with a plastic or cloth cover. Any foliage touching the cover or extending beyond the cover may freeze but the interior will be fine. Spraying **Bonide® Wilt Stop™** will protect tender and tropical plants down to about 28°F. The short lists of plants that may need protection this winter include: (1) Citrus, (2) Bougainvillea, (3) Hibiscus, (4) Mandevilla, and (5) Brugmansia.

Consider planting cover crops in unused garden spaces. Cover crops keep soil from compacting during winter rains and add much needed nitrogen to the soil when turned into beds in the spring. Popular cover crops include fava beans, which are also edible, and strawberry clover and red clover. We also carry winter cover crop mix, which includes bell beans, magnus peas and purple vetch. Fill the bed with starts of dwarf peas, one foot apart if you want an edible cover crop. Plant mustard starts, which produces a root long and strong enough to crack the clay subsoil.

Get ready for pruning season! Check out our **Pruning Tool Renovation Service**, which includes cleaning and sharpening and replacing missing parts for most pruning tools. If you're unsure whether we can service yours, bring it in for assessment. Sharp pruning tools make clean cuts that heal quickly.

Hold off fertilizing container plants until February, then use a fertilizer labelled for your plant. Remember: the fertilizer guide for determining how much fertilizer to use is to measure the diameter of the container in inches, divide the total by six (6); use the total in tablespoons of fertilizer once a month and be sure to water thoroughly.

Hummingbirds don't migrate in this area so as winter comes, food sources get slim. Set up a feeder and enjoy their antics and bright colors through the winter. You can make your own hummingbird food by dissolving one part of sugar in four parts of water. Add red food coloring if you like, but it's not needed. Mix up a quart or two and store it in the refrigerator. We also have **Hummingbird Instant Nectar** for a quick preparation at home.

If you have a fruit tree that is declining and cannot be replaced, we *may* be able to take a cutting from your heirloom tree and graft it on to a new rootstock.

When we don't have winter rain on a regular basis and if we go two weeks *without* rain as we did last year, you will have to turn on your sprinkler system again. Be especially alert to the watering needs of potted plants which dry out quickly in cold, dry winter air.

Liquid Fence® Deer & Rabbit Repellent has proven to be extremely effective in deterring deer from yards and gardens. The trick is to use it *exactly* as instructed.

Use **BioAdvanced™ Grub Control** to kill the food raccoons are digging for and using for food. **Havahart® Critter Ridder®** has been effective in discouraging raccoons from digging in lawns until the grub control takes hold.

Likewise, **Bonide® MoleMAX® Mole & Vole Repellent** has proven to be effective in ridding yards and gardens of gophers and moles. The secret, again, is to follow the instructions *exactly* as instructed. **Bonide® MoleMAX® Mole & Vole Repellent** will not kill the pests but rather chases them someplace else.

Consider watering indoor plants with a mixture of two tablespoons vinegar per one gallon of water once a month in order to reduce salt build-up and to reduce pH level.