



Your Canyon County Garden in January

Oh, those winter doldrums when we literally ache for color! Cabin fever sets in as the holidays come to an end. We've put away our decorations and everywhere we look, it's brown or grey. We long to be outdoors with the hot sun on our arms and cool grass under our feet. With an eye to the future, let's prepare now for spring and summer.

Plans & Preparations:

- Begin attending the Canyon County Master Gardener Program to learn money saving information for success with lawns, trees, and plants. You will enter the spring months loaded with great ideas, increased knowledge, and enthusiasm! Read books, magazines, and surf the internet for gardening ideas. Order seed catalogs now.
- Make your seed purchases from catalogs early, as many sell out. Choose disease resistant varieties. Store seeds in a cool, dry location.
- Be sure to include plants in your yard that bloom in the fall, such as Aster, chrysanthemums, and more.
- Consider creating a gardening journal. You can track when you fertilized, your plant choices, when you planted, first and last freezes, precipitation, what worked and what didn't, and more. You will refer to your journals in following years and be a better gardener.



- Begin your plans, drawings, etc. for your spring, summer, and fall projects.
- When making gardening plans, include flowers for making bouquets from your own garden - gladiolas, iris, roses, stock, verbena, and more.
- If you plan to add trees/shrubs, remember they may get big – research full growth size and allow room for both canopy and root growth. Consider dwarf fruit trees as they take up little space and have a high fruit yield.
- Keep sunlight in mind as you plan where to plant. The arc formed by the sun's path across the sky will change with each season, particularly in northern states such as Idaho. Keep those arcs in mind as you decide where to plant your trees. Where will you have shade in the summer? Where will it be in the winter? Also, keep in mind that different plants have different sunlight needs.
- Consider raising the level of your lawn in one or two areas by bringing in more soil. Keep these points of interest no higher than a couple of feet, gently sloped, irregularly shaped, and large enough to look as if Mother Nature had a hand in sculpting. Adding rocks, trees, bushes, or a flower bed can make these beautiful focal points in your yard. Plan ahead for to avoid water drainage problems.
- Consider adding berms to cut down noise, create privacy, and help redirect water in

problem areas. Be sure to keep berms well weeded – weed seeds from a high berm can easily blow in the wind. Watering plants on berms can be a concern as you battle the slope. If you don't water enough, you can lose your plants. Trying to water enough can also create drainage problems for yourself and neighbors. Correct placement of the berm, keeping your berms fairly low, including enough plants, and water retention wells around trees make the difference. Apply your water in increments.

- Plan to give the gift of gardening to a child. Provide space in a vegetable bed or a flower pot to be a child's own and let your child choose from plants you know are hardy such as carrots and radishes, or geraniums and petunias. Plant produce in your yard that will encourage your child to eat from the vine when outdoors playing, such as sugar snaps, cherry tomatoes, and raspberries. They will grow up to be gardeners.

