

Gardening for many Californians is a year-round pastime set to the rhythms of the seasons. While the timing of tasks varies from region to region, California Bountiful gardening expert Pat Rubin offers the following as a general checklist.

Year-round
gardening
checklist



january

- Prune fruit trees and clean up all debris around the base of the trees. Apply new mulch.
- Divide daylilies, Shasta daisies, yarrow, ornamental grasses and other perennials.
- Direct seed peas, radishes, lettuce and spinach in the vegetable garden.

february

- Spray apricot trees to prevent brown rot. If you haven't applied a dormant spray, do so before buds start to swell.
- Trim damaged wood from fruit trees.
- Prune clematis vines.
- Give the inside of the house a lift: Cut branches of early spring flowering shrubs and bring them indoors. Try forsythia, cherry, crab-apple, whatever you see blooming.
- Plant (either seeds or purchased plants) snapdragons, Shasta daisy, bleeding heart and stock.
- In the vegetable garden, plant Jerusalem artichoke, strawberries and rhubarb. Direct seed radishes, beets and chard. Start peppers and tomatoes indoors.
- Camellias and azaleas are in bloom. Choose the ones you like best for your garden.

march

- Prune and fertilize spring flowering shrubs after bloom.
- Feed camellias, roses, annual flowers and berries with a slow-release fertilizer.
- Keep pulling weeds.
- Aphids? Hose them off with a strong, but fine spray of water or use insecticidal soap.
- Watch for signs of slugs and earwigs. Handpick at night or use bait. Make sure to use one that is not toxic to pets and children.
- Shop for citrus trees.
- Over-seed bare spots in the lawn.

april

- The first flush of bloom for roses is this month. Now is a good time to shop for them. Feed roses and make sure they are watered. Watch for mildew.
- Once all chance of frost is past, start seedlings in the garden. Easy ones to start outside in the garden include cucumbers, summer squash, winter squash and beans.
- Look around for containers filled with water, as these can be breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Dump the water.
- Prune early blooming shrubs—lilacs, forsythia, azalea, quince, weigela—after they bloom.
- Plant citrus now.
- Transplant tomatoes, eggplant and peppers into the garden as weather warms. Keep row cover handy in case of cold weather.
- Direct seed beets, chard and radishes in the garden. Plant dahlia tubers.
- Check sprinklers to make sure they are covering the ground evenly.
- Start feeding houseplants on a monthly basis now through October.

may

- Flower seeds to plant include cornflower, four o'clocks, marigolds, sunflowers and zinnias.
- Deadhead perennials. Groom and stake them as needed.
- Break off old flowers on rhododendrons just above the growth buds.
- Direct seed melons, cucumber, summer squash, corn and beans.
- Mulch around plants to conserve moisture. Be sure to leave a small circle of bare soil around each plant.
- Fertilize vegetables monthly.
- Pinch back petunias and fuchsias to encourage bushier growth and more flowers.
- Keep your lawnmower set at the highest blade setting. This helps the lawn conserve water.

june

- Water early in the day to conserve water.
- Set mower blades to highest setting; this also conserves water.
- Plant snap beans, lima beans, cucumbers, eggplants, peppers, squash and tomato plants.
- Fertilize camellias and azaleas.
- Deadhead roses to encourage new blooms.
- Cut cannas to the ground after they bloom and they'll send up new stems and bloom again.
- Fertilize citrus.
- Prune oleanders after bloom.
- Pinch back dahlias and mums to encourage new growth for bushier plants with more blooms.

july

- Prune wisteria now to keep plants under control and for bigger blooms next spring. Tie some of the strappy stems to support and encourage them to grow where you want them. Cut the rest back to within 6 inches of the main branches.
- Wondering when corn is ripe? Silk will start to dry up and kernels of corn, if pressed with a fingernail, will release a milky liquid.
- Clean up fallen fruit, vegetables and flowers around plants to head off future pest problems.
- Cut back Mexican evening primrose for a second flush of bloom in late summer.
- Watch berry vines: Canes that produced fruit need to be cut down at the end of the season; they won't bear fruit again.
- Divide and replant irises.
- Plant a second crop of corn, beans and radishes.

august

- Keep harvesting vegetables and deadhead flowers so the garden keeps producing.
- Give fruit trees a deep watering. Prune if necessary.
- Fertilize fruit and nut trees.
- Add organic matter to the soil before planting winter vegetables.
- Fertilize camellias, azaleas and gardenias with chelated iron if leaves are yellow.
- Feed begonias, fuchsias, annuals and container plants.
- Pinch back mums for more blooms this fall.

september

- Plant California native bulbs: ornamental onion (*Allium unifolium*), globe lily (*Calochortus albus*) and mission bells (*Fritillaria biflora*).
- Sow seeds of poppies, clarkia and lupine.
- Dig, divide and replant overgrown perennials as they finish blooming.
- Now is the best time to sow a new lawn or reseed bare spots.
- Watch for snails. Handpick.
- Add compost to vegetable garden.
- Plant onions and garlic before frost.
- Begin planting cool season annuals like ornamental cabbage, kale, pansy, primrose and sweet peas.
- Plant cool season vegetables like broccoli, chard, cauliflower, lettuce and spinach.

october

- Apply chelated iron to azaleas, gardenias and camellias if leaves are yellow.
- Clean up the summer garden and compost the remains.
- In high-elevation areas, dig up gladiolus, dahlias and begonias after the foliage dies. Store in a cool, dark, dry place for the winter.
- Keep trimming roses.
- Give houseplants a rest. Withhold fertilizer until spring. If plants have been outside, hose them off before bringing indoors for the winter.
- To protect citrus from brown rot, keep leaves and fallen fruit picked up. Prune lower branches to 24 inches above ground. This prevents fungus spores from splashing up from the ground.
- Plant daffodils over a three- to four-week period for a long blooming season next spring.

november

- Chrysanthemums show up in nurseries this month, and they are spectacular. Choose ones just beginning to bloom for the longest display in your garden or on your patio.
- Plant cool season annuals: calendula, snapdragons, pansies and Iceland poppies.
- Fertilize the lawn with a winter-type fertilizer; stop fertilizing roses.
- Cut rose canes back about 1/3 to keep plants from breaking in winter storms. Prune away dead and weak branches in shrubs and trees.
- Clean up fallen leaves and spent flowers around your plant to prevent overwintering insects.
- For larger blooms, thin camellia buds.
- Don't prune evergreen shrubs or citrus.

december

- Watch for bare root plants in nurseries: fruit trees, roses, berries, vines, shrubs, grapes, artichokes, horseradish, strawberries, rhubarb and more.
- Pot paper white bulbs in pots to give as gifts.
- Later this month, spray peaches and nectarines with lime sulfur, copper sulfate or fixed copper to control peach leaf curl.
- Cut chrysanthemums to about 8 inches after they bloom.
- If you're using a living Christmas tree, keep it outside until just before Christmas, making sure it is well-watered before bringing it inside.
- Give gardenias, azaleas and camellias chelated iron if leaves are turning yellow.

Contact us:

California Bountiful, 2300 River Plaza Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833 • 800-698-FARM (3276)
info@californiabountiful.com • www.californiabountiful.com

