Fruits
- Cover strawberries with several inches of straw mulch to protect flower buds during winter.

Trees and shrubs
- Protect young trees from rabbit damage with chicken wire or hardware cloth fencing.

Flowers
- Remove diseased foliage from iris and peonies to prevent problems next year.
- Protect hybrid-tea roses with several inches of soil and straw over the winter (RG 310).

Houseplants
- Stop fertilizing houseplants until spring.

Vegetables
- Apply and incorporate 2 to 3 inches of manure or compost into the soil (PM 820).
- Leave the "fern-like" foliage of asparagus to stand for the winter (PM 994).

Early Winter

December

Trees and shrubs
- Gently brush heavy snow from evergreens to prevent breakage.

Flowers
- Check stored bulbs or roots of cannas, dahlias, and tuberous begonias and discard any that are discolored or rotting.

Herbs
- Try starting seeds of herbs (such as parsley or basil) for a windowsill garden.

Houseplants
- Rotate plants regularly to prevent one-sided growth.
- Raise humidity by placing plants on pebble trays.

Vegetables
- Order seed of vegetables and flowers for next year's garden (PM 607).
- Make plans for next year's garden. Be sure to rotate crops to a different location each year (PM 814, PM 819).

Late Winter

late February March

Fruits
- Prune grapevines (RG 502).
- Remove all weak, diseased, or damaged canes of summer and fall-bearing raspberries at ground level (RG 501).
- Prune apple trees (PM 780).

Trees and shrubs
- Check for rabbit damage.
- Prune deciduous trees (SUL 5).
- Put cut branches of magnolia, crabapple, and forsythia in vases for forcing blooms indoors.

Flowers
- Start seeds of petunia, snapdragon, impatiens, and salvia indoors (RG 314, RG 326).

Herbs
- Use the herbs you dried/stored for sauces and soups.

Houseplants
- Continue watering amaryllis, poinsettia, and holiday cactus after flowers fade (RG 308, RG 316, RG 328).

Vegetables
- Spread fireplace ashes sparingly on garden.
- Start seeds indoors of cole crops (such as broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower) 5 to 6 weeks before April planting date (PM 1896).
- Start seeds of eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes 8 weeks before planting in mid-May (PM 874).

If you want to learn more about horticulture through training and volunteer work, ask your ISU Extension office for information about the ISU Extension Master Gardener program. For more information on selection, planting, cultural practices, and environmental quality, contact your Iowa State University Extension county office or visit these Web sites:

ISU Extension publications
http://store.extension.iastate.edu

ISU Horticulture
www.yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu

Reiman Gardens
www.reimangardens.com

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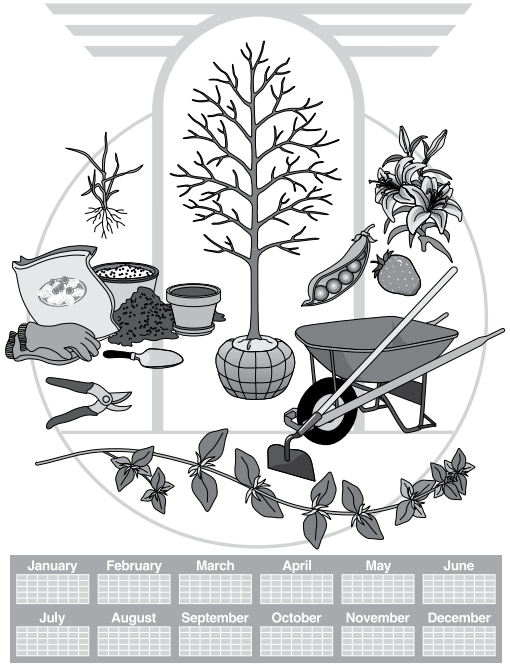
RG 105 Revised July 2008

REIMAN GARDENS
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Garden Tips
Guidelines to Seasonal Chores



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Early Spring

Lawn
- Rake the lawn to remove twigs, leaves, and trash.
- Apply preemergent herbicide in April to prevent crabgrass.
- Mow regularly at a height of 2½ to 3 inches for Kentucky bluegrass. Never remove more than ⅓ of the leaf blade at one time.

Fruits
- To control scale on fruit trees, apply a dormant oil spray when temperatures are above 40°F.
- Remove mulch from strawberries in April as new growth begins.

Trees and shrubs
- Purchase and plant bare root nursery stock before buds break.

Flowers
- Start seeds of annual flowers for transplanting outdoors after danger of frost.
- Divide hosta and other summer and fall-blooming perennials as new growth appears (RG 319).
- Pot up stored bulbs and roots for a head start on blooms (RG 311, RG 315).

Herbs
- Start seeds of herbs, such as basil, for transplanting outdoors after danger of frost (RG 801).

Houseplants
- Repot houseplants, if needed, into a larger container.
- Begin fertilizing houseplants lightly.

Vegetables
- Plant broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kohlrabi, and certified potato pieces outdoors in April.
- Acclimate seedlings grown indoors to outdoor temperatures and light levels prior to planting in garden.
- Do not work soil when it is saturated.

Late Spring

Lawn
- In preparation for hot, dry summer weather, raise mower height to 3 to 3½ inches.

Fruits
- Heavily bearing apple trees should be hand thinned within 6 weeks of bloom.

Trees and shrubs
- Prune spring-blooming shrubs (such as lilac, bridal wreath spirea, and forsythia) after blooming.

Flowers
- Do not remove the foliage of bulbs (such as tulip or daffodil) until it yellows and dies.

Herbs
- Fertilize lightly to promote new growth on sage, rosemary, and lavender.

Houseplants
- Move houseplants outdoors into a shady, protected location for the season, if desired.
- Water and fertilize regularly.

Vegetables
- Stagger plantings of beans and corn for extended harvest.
- Plant tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers after danger of frost has past. Stake or cage tomatoes to discourage foliar diseases (PM 608).
- Thin seedlings to prevent overcrowding and weak growth.

Early Summer

Lawn
- During dry weather, irrigate in the morning to allow the foliage to dry by afternoon.

Fruits
- Renovate June-bearing strawberry beds immediately after final harvest.
- Remove 3 to 4 inches of shoot tips of black and purple raspberry canes to encourage branching (RG 501).

Trees and shrubs
- Mulch to conserve moisture and prevent weed competition (RG 209, SUL 12).

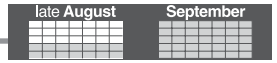
Flowers
- Fertilize and water annual flowers regularly to promote growth and an abundance of blooms.
- Deadhead flowers to encourage more blooms.

Herbs
- Harvest leaves for cooking or drying before flowering.

Houseplants
- Wash leaves with warm, soapy water to remove dust.

Vegetables
- Stop harvesting asparagus and rhubarb by mid-June.
- Water weekly during dry weather.
- Control weeds by hand-pulling or hoeing.
- Regular irrigation of tomatoes will help prevent or reduce problems with blossom-end-rot.

Late Summer



Lawn
- Reseed bare patches or new lawns.
- Aerate lawns in areas with compacted or heavy clay soils.

Fruits
- Harvest pears as their color changes to lighter green.
- Prune suckers at ground level on grafted fruit trees.

Trees and shrubs
- Continue to water newly planted trees and shrubs as needed.
- Plant evergreen trees and shrubs (PM 1429g).

Flowers
- Harvest flowers from celosia, globe amaranth, and salvia for drying indoors (PM 1398).

Vegetables
- Continue harvesting beans, squash, cucumbers, and tomatoes to keep plants productive.
- Plant seeds of lettuce, spinach, and radish for harvest in fall.
- Harvest potatoes and onions as the tops yellow and die (PM 731, PM 1889, PM 1890).

Early Fall

Lawn
- Apply broadleaf herbicide to lawns.

Fruits
- Harvest apples and store at 32 to 35°F in humid areas (PM 1078).

Trees and shrubs
- Plant deciduous trees and shrubs.

Flowers
- Dig gladiolus corms and dahlia and canna roots for winter storage (RG 311, RG 315, RG 323).
- Harvest seed from cleome, poppies, zinnia, marigold, and other flowers to scatter next spring.
- Plant tulip, daffodil, and other spring-flowering bulbs before the ground freezes (RG 312).
- Take cuttings of coleus and geraniums to grow indoors for the winter (RG 320).

Herbs
- Before frost, pot up tender herbs (such as sage and rosemary) to grow indoors through the winter.

Houseplants
- Inspect plants for pests or disease.
- Bring plants indoors before the first frost.

Vegetables
- Harvest pumpkin, winter squash, and gourds as vines die from frost.

Late Fall

Lawn
- Fertilize lawns (1 pound N per 1,000 sq.ft.) to promote root growth and encourage early green-up in the spring.