



What to Do in the Garden in December

By Pat Dumas

What is there to do in the garden in December, you ask? Plenty! It's not that you're out there every day pulling, raking, and digging like in the summer. There are surprises in the garden in December that doesn't readily come to mind that are exciting and actually useful!

Making your garden a winter hotspot for birds is a natural progression of the garden you so lovingly kept up all summer long. Keeping it a little wild with good brush cover, the right bird seed, and water, will bring the birds in and create hours of enjoyment when you can't be outside to dig.

- **Make a Bird Haven.** The seeds and debris scattered in your flower and vegetable garden is not for naught! Birds you have never seen before will forage for scattered vegetable seeds, flower seeds and more. Cardinals love squished tomatoes and their seeds! Set up your feeders—a good start is a universal seed feeder and suet holder.
- **The best bird feed to start with is a good mix of Sunflower, millet and safflower seed.** Our Audubon Society Supreme mix has just the thing to attract a good mix of birds like Cardinals, Sparrows, Chickadees, Woodpeckers, and Finches.
- **Suet blocks are prepared with fat and suet from real meat—but doesn't turn rancid like the fresh stuff.** In winter, you're sure to get a great variety of insect-eating birds at the suet feeder. Other birds will take a taste as well—as it provides fast energy for birds trying to survive the cold weather.
- **Water is hard to find in the winter.** Unusual birds that wouldn't normally come into your yard will find it if you have water out in the winter. It's the Holy Grail in the winter for birds—keep your bird bath unfrozen at all times if you can by using a simple electric bird bath heater.

- **Take a walk on the wild side and pick your old grape vines, wisteria vines, and berries for Christmas decorating. Ornamental grass seed heads and dried hydrangeas are spectacular indoors dried in a big vase, and dried berries and vines look beautiful curled around wreaths and garland. Use Winterberry, Holly, Pyracantha, and purple Beauty Berry.**
- **The dried sticks and branches in your yard are there for the taking! Don't throw them out on the curb! Put them in the kindling pile by your fireplace or stove. Pine cones make beautiful kindling. They give off a fragrance of the deep woods when burned, and the resin makes them light up quickly.**
- **Micro- Garden! Make a Fairy Garden and/or a Terrarium. If you can't work big outside, work little inside. Create your own special plant world indoors with a Terrarium or little Fairy Garden where you and your kids can spend hours arranging little furniture, moss, and plants in your very own magic kingdom. Our Greenhouse has supplies.**
- **Snow is not just for aggravation while walking and driving. Snow actually provides a good cover of insulation to plants, shrubs and trees over the winter- it's nature's way of protecting against the damaging effects of freezes and thaws. Snow also gives back good minerals to the ground during the winter.**
- **Look at plant catalogs! They come to the mailbox by the dozens, and you can look and dream about what you want for next year. Sisk's Annual and Perennial yards carry the best selection and variety of plants anywhere, and you're sure to find what you're looking for here in the spring.**
- **Last, but not least, spread your raked leaves on the vegetable and flower gardens. Over the winter, they will decompose and keep the soil underneath beautifully rich with lots of humus and nutrients.**