

Month-by-Month Planting & Maintenance

Excerpted from *Howard Garrett's Texas Organic Gardening*. 1998, Gulf Publishing Company

JANUARY:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fruit and pecan trees, grapes, berries, asparagus, onions, English peas, anemones, and ranunculus.• Balled-and-burlapped or containerized trees, shrubs, and vines.• Transplant plants during dormant period.• Spring flowers and vegetable seeds indoors.• Cold-hardy color: dianthus, pansies, flowering kale, and cabbage (if the weather is mild).• Complete daffodil plantings in early January. "Force" bulbs in pots indoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spot water any dry areas to avoid plant desiccation.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winter annuals and grasses.• Asparagus beds in late January.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horticultural oil if needed to scale-prone plants such as oaks, hollies, camellias, euonymus, pecan, and fruit trees. Do not do if beneficial insect populations have been established.• Houseplants: spray with garlic/pepper tea or dilute citrus oil mixture for mealy bugs, spider mites, and scale
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shade trees and summer flowering trees. Remove dead and damaged limbs.• Summer-flowering trees including crepe myrtles (remove no twigs larger than a pencil in diameter), abelias, altheas.• Evergreen shrubs.• Fruit trees. (Best time is just before bud break.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have soil tests run.• Turn compost pile monthly or more often to keep moist.• Plan spring landscape improvement projects and begin construction activities.• Prepare garden soil by adding compost and lava sand and mulching bare soil.• Take mower, tiller, and trimmers into shop for repairs before spring.• Feed the birds!

FEBRUARY:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, English peas, asparagus, potatoes, other cold-tolerant vegetables. • Petunias, pansies, pinks, snapdragons, alyssum, calendulas, glads, cannas, and daylilies. • Fruit trees and berries. • Transplant existing landscape plants. • Transplant crowded perennials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter annuals and dry soil areas as needed.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planting areas with a 100% organic fertilizer at approximately 20 lbs/1,000 sq ft. If soil is already healthy, rate can be reduced to 10 lbs/1,000 sq ft. • Cool-season flowers with earthworm castings and bat guano at 10 lbs/1,000 sq ft. • Apply as much lava sand as the budget allows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant bark aphids: no treatment needed in most cases. • Dormant oil (vegetable oil is best) for serious infestations of scale insects. Be sure to keep mixture shaken while using. • Spray all growing plants with Garrett Juice.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shade and ornamental trees lightly to remove dead, diseased, and crossing limbs. • Peaches and plums to encourage 45° angle growth. Grapes, by 80-90%. Best time to prune all fruit and nut trees. • Evergreens and summer-flowering plants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust and repair sprinkler system. • Have soil tested. Watch for accumulations of phosphorus. • Have maintenance equipment repaired for spring use. Sharpen hoes, pruning tools, and mower blades. • Add compost and top-dressing mulch to all unhealthy soil areas. • Turn the compost pile regularly. • Feed the birds!

MARCH:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees and shrubs. • Finish cool-season vegetable plantings. Begin warm-season crops after last killing freeze date. • Best tomatoes for Texas: Celebrity, Carnival, Spring Giant, Jackpot, Better Boy, Porter, Sweet 100. Plant a mixture of varieties and include some open-pollinated choices. • Continue to plant cool-season annuals such as petunias and snapdragons. Begin planting warm-season types after last killing freeze. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annuals and other dry soil areas as needed. • Wildflower areas in dry years.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planting areas with a 100% organic fertilizer at approximately 20 lbs/1,000 sq ft (if not done in February). • Foliar feed all growing plants with Garrett Juice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loopers and caterpillars: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i> biological worm spray. • Pillbugs, snails, slugs: diatomaceous earth/garlic tea, beer traps, citrus oil products. • Aphids: garlic-pepper tea. A blast of water and a release of ladybugs is even better. • Black spot, powdery mildew, bacterial leaf spot: Garrett Juice plus garlic. • Sycamore anthracnose: Bordeaux mixture as leaves emerge. • Fruit tree sprays; garlic-pepper tea and baking soda. Garrett Juice plus garlic and potassium bicarbonate. • Fertilizer sprays such as Garrett Juice are all that's needed once healthy soil is established.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring-flowering shrubs and vines only after they finish blooming; flowering quince, spirea, forsythia, weigela, azaleas, camellias, Caroline jessamine, wisteria, climbing roses, etc. • Fruit trees before bud break. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn the compost pile. • Use completed compost for bed preparation. Use partially completed compost as a top-dressing mulch. • Mulch all bare soil. • Feed the birds!

APRIL:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turfgrass from plugs, sod, sprigs, or seed.• Roses from containers.• Container-grown fruit and pecan trees.• Warm-season flowers including (sun) periwinkles, cosmos, portulaca, copper leaf, marigolds, zinnias, lantana; (shade) caladiums, coleus, begonia, impatiens, and nicotiana.• Warm-season vegetables including melons, okra, southern peas, corn, squash, beans, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes.• Container flowers, in pots and baskets. Use a potting soil mix containing compost.• Summer and fall-flowering perennials.• Herb garden plants in beds, pots, and hanging baskets.• Re-pot houseplants if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All planting areas deeply but infrequently during dry periods.• Potted plants as needed.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer-flowering shrubs and roses with organic fertilizers.• Spray rose foliage weekly with Garrett Juice, Epsom salts, and garlic tea.• Foliar feed all plants with Garrett Juice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Release green lacewings for thrips in roses and glads as well as for general insect control.• Snails, slugs, pillbugs: diatomaceous earth and garlic-pepper tea, beer traps or citrus sprays.• Release trichogramma wasps for pecan casebearers.• Ticks, fleas, and chiggers: diatomaceous earth, sulfur and beneficial nematode.• Bacterial leaf spot of peaches and plums: Bordeaux mixture, baking soda and water, or garlic-pepper tea.• Aphids: sugar water blast followed by release of ladybugs.• Black spot on roses: Garrett Juice, garlic, and potassium bicarbonate spray.• Fruit sprays: same as above.• Fire ants: Drench mounds with manure compost tea, molasses, and citrus oil.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring-blooming vines and shrubs immediately after bloom.• Pick-prune hedges to be wider at the bottom for better light and thicker growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mow weekly and leave the clippings on the lawn.• Turn compost pile.• Continue to add new vegetative matter and manure to existing and additional compost piles.• Mulch all bare soil.• Feed the birds!

MAY:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawn grasses from plugs, sod, seed, sprigs, or by hydromulching. Plant buffalograss in sun. • Tropical color in beds or pots: bougainvillea, mandevilla, allamanda, penta, hibiscus, and others. • Trees and shrubs. • Warm-season annual color plants. • Cannas, glads, caladiums, and other seasonal bulbs. Mums and other fall perennials. • Groundcovers from 2 1/4" or 4" pots. • Hot-weather vegetables, including southern peas, okra, and melons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planting areas deeply but infrequently during dry periods. • Potted plants regularly.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All annual flowers and potted plants with bat guano, earthworm castings, cottonseed meal, or other 100% organic fertilizers. • Spray all growing plants with Garrett Juice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release trichogramma wasps for pecan casebearers and moth larvae. • Fleas, ticks, and chiggers: diatomaceous earth, beneficial nematodes. • Cabbage loopers and other caterpillars: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i>. • Aphids on tender new growth: strong sugar water blast, or garlic-pepper tea. Release ladybugs. • Release green lacewings and ladybugs for general insect control. • Lace bugs on azaleas, sycamores: garlic-pepper tea or Garrett Juice plus garlic. • Weeds: hand remove or use mechanical devices. • Fire ants: Drench mounds with manure compost tea, molasses, and citrus oil products.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing roses after their bloom. • Spring-flowering shrubs, vines, shrubs, and trees after their bloom. • "Pinch" away the growing tips of mums weekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mow weekly and leave clippings on the lawn. • Turn compost pile and continue to add new ingredients. • Mulch all bare soil. • Feed the birds!

JUNE:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All warm-season grasses; bermuda, zoysia, St. Augustine, and buffalo. • Summer annual color, such as portulaca, marigold, zinnia, periwinkle, lantana, copperleaf, amaranthus, cosmos, and verbenas. • Tropical color: bougainvilleas, hibiscus, pentas, allamandas, mandevillas, etc. • Crepe myrtle, while in bloom to be sure of color. • Shrubs and trees. • Fall tomatoes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planting areas deeply but infrequently during dry periods. • Potted plants regularly. Daily waterings are needed for some plants.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planting areas with an organic fertilizer. This should be the second major fertilization. • Foliar feed all plantings and lawns with Garrett Juice. • Iron deficiency results in yellowed leaves with dark green veins on the newest growth first. Apply iron and sulfur products. Epsom salts spray will also help in alkaline soil areas. Treat soil with Texas greensand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spider mites: garlic-pepper tea and seaweed. Spray every 3 days for 9 days total. Spray citrus oil. • Fleas, ticks, chiggers: diatomaceous earth, beneficial nematodes. Spray citrus products. • Bagworms: (<i>Bt</i>) <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>. • Webworms in pecans, persimmons: <i>Bt</i> and include one teaspoon of liquid soap to improve penetration. • Scale insects, including mealy bugs: summer-weight horticultural oil or citrus oil. • Black spot on roses, mildew, and other fungi: Garrett Juice, garlic, potassium bicarbonate. • Weeds: hand remove and work on improving soil health. • Lacebugs, elm leaf beetles: garlic-pepper tea, summer-weight horticultural oil or Garrett Juice plus citrus oil.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackberries to remove fruiting canes after harvest. Prune new canes to encourage side branching. • Remove spent flowers from daisies, daylilies, cannas, and other summer flowers. • Dead and damaged wood from trees and shrubs as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mow weekly and leave clippings on the lawn. • Turn compost pile. • Mulch all bare soil. • Feed the birds!

JULY:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Color for fall: marigolds, zinnias, celosa, Joseph's coat.• Container-grown nursery stock.• Warm-season lawn grasses.• Tomatoes, peppers, melons, other warm season vegetables for fall garden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All planting areas deeply but infrequently during dry periods.• Outdoor container plants daily; others as needed.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All planting areas with 100% organic fertilizer if not done in June.• For iron deficiency, apply Texas greensand.• Spray all plantings with Garrett Juice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chinch bugs: diatomaceous earth or citrus oil spray.• Elm leaf beetles, lace bugs: summer-weight horticultural oil or appropriate <i>Bt</i>.• Spider mites: seaweed and garlic-pepper tea. Spray every 3 days for 9 days total.• Fleas, ticks, chiggers, Bermuda mites: diatomaceous earth and beneficial nematodes.• Webworms in pecans and persimmons, bagworms: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i> with 1 teaspoon soap per gallon.• Leaf rollers: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i> or citrus oil sprays.• Scale insects on euonymus, hollies, camellias: spray horticultural oil or citrus oil products.• Weeds: hand remove or use mechanical devices.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roses to encourage fall bloom.• Dead or damaged limbs.• Flowering plants to remove spent flower heads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mow weekly and leave clippings on lawn.• Turn compost pile, add new ingredients, and start new piles.• Mulch all bare soil with partially completed compost or other coarse textured material.• Feed the birds!

AUGUST:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fall color such as mums, asters, marigolds, zinnias, and celosia.• Fall-flowering bulbs such as spider lilies, fall crocus, and fall amaryllis.• Finish warm-season vegetable plantings of beans, corn, cucumbers, melons, and squash.• Cool-season vegetables, including broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage, spinach, potatoes, lettuce, carrots, beets, radishes, and English peas.• Finish planting warm-season lawn grasses: buffalo, Bermuda, St. Augustine, and zoysia.• Wildflower seed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water deeply and as infrequently as possible. Your garden and landscape will usually need more water this month than any other.• Potted plants and hanging baskets daily.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foliar feed all planting and lawns with liquid organic fertilizer.• Spray Garrett Juice on all plants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grub worms: good soil culture is the best control. Beneficial nematodes and molasses.• Chinch bugs: diatomaceous earth.• Aphids: garlic-pepper tea. Sugar water blast and release of ladybugs.• Fire ants: drench mounds with manure compost tea, molasses, and citrus.• Chewing insects: diatomaceous earth, garlic-pepper tea and citrus oil spray.• Cabbage loopers: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i>.• Borers in peaches, plums and other trees: soil health and Tree Trunk Goop.• Release beneficial insects if needed: praying mantises, ladybugs, and green lacewings.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trim spent flower stalks and blossoms of annuals and perennials to stimulate regrowth of stems and blooms.• Remove dead and damaged wood from shrubs and trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mow weekly and leave clippings on the lawn.• Turn compost pile.• Feed the birds!

SEPTEMBER:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool-season, leafy root crops such as carrots, beets, turnips, etc. • Wildflower seeds. • Finish warm-season lawn grass plantings by early September. • Transplant established spring-flowering bulbs, iris, daylilies, daisies, and peonies. • Perennials. • Cool-season grasses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water deeply during dry spells. • Potted plants and hanging baskets regularly.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planting areas with an organic fertilizer at approximately 20 lbs/1,000 sq ft. • Foliar feed all planting and lawns with Garrett Juice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown patch in St. Augustine: cornmeal and compost. • Webworms, tent caterpillars: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i>. • Grub worms: sugar and beneficial nematodes. • Cabbage loopers on broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, brussels sprouts: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i>. • Aphids on tender new fall growth: garlic tea or sugar water blast followed by release of ladybugs. • Spray compacted soil with Garrett Juice. • Fire ants: manure compost tea, molasses, and citrus oil. • Roses for black spot and powdery mildew: garlic-pepper tea or Garrett Juice plus garlic and potassium bicarbonate. • Iron chlorosis (yellowed leaves, dark green veins, newest growth first): chelated iron. In calcareous soils, apply sulfur at 5 lbs/1,000 sq ft twice per year, or Texas greensand.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Root-prune wisterias that failed to bloom. • Remove spent blooms of summer-flowering perennials. • Remove surface tree roots if needed, but no more than 20% of root system per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mow weekly and leave clippings on the lawn. • Turn the compost pile. • Feed the birds!

OCTOBER:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pansies, violets, pinks, snapdragons, flowering cabbage and kale, English daisies, Iceland poppies, wallflowers, garlic, and other cool-season flowers.• Complete wildflower plantings.• Trees, shrubs, vines, and spring- and summer-flowering perennials.• Strawberries.• Cool-season grasses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newly-planted wildflower area if no rain.• Newly-planted annuals.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All plantings with an organic fertilizer at about 20 lbs/1,000 sq ft.• Foliar feed all plantings and lawns with Garrett Juice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brown patch in St. Augustine: cornmeal and compost.• Peach leaf curl: Bordeaux mixture, garlic-pepper tea or Garrett Juice plus garlic.• Cabbage loopers in garden: <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i>
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick-prune shrubs as needed, but save major pruning for winter.• Remove dead and damaged wood from trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To re-flower a poinsettia, give it uninterrupted darkness 14 hours each day and light for 10 hours until December, then move to a well-lighted location.• Mow weekly and leave the clippings on the lawn.• Build new compost piles and turn old ones.• Use completed compost to prepare new planting beds.• Use partially completed compost as a top-dressing mulch for ornamentals and vegetables.• Feed the birds!

NOVEMBER:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees and shrubs. • Spring bulbs, including daffodils and grape hyacinths. Pre-cool tulips and hyacinths for 45 days at 40° prior to planting. • Spring- and summer-flowering perennials, including daisies, iris, daylilies, lilies, thrift, lythrum, etc. • Spring-flowering annuals, including pansies, pinks, snapdragons, flowering cabbage and kale, English daisies, and California and Iceland poppies. • Winter-hardy nursery stock. • Cool-season grasses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planting areas at least once if no rain.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulbs, annuals, and perennials with earthworm castings and other gentle organic fertilizers. • Indoor plants with earthworm castings and other low-odor organic fertilizers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch roots of removed annuals for nematodes (knots in the roots). Treat infected soil with citrus pulp or oil. • Watch houseplants for spider mites, scale, and aphids. Spray as needed with Agrispon, Neo-Life soap, and garlic. • Watch lawn for signs of grubworm damage. Grass will be loose on top of ground. Treat with sugar and beneficial nematodes.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin major tree pruning. Remove dead limbs before leaves fall. Too early for fruit trees. • Pick-prune shrubs to remove longest shoots if needed. • Remove spent blooms and seed heads from flowering plants. • Cut off tops of brown perennials; leave roots in the soil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have landscape and garden soils tested now to determine soil balancing needs. • Pick tomatoes the night before the first freeze, then let them ripen indoors. • Put all fallen leaves, spent annuals, and other vegetative matter into the compost piles. • Add mulch to your garden -- do not cultivate. • Mulch all bare ornamental beds for winter protection. • Turn compost piles. • Feed the birds!

DECEMBER:

PLANT	WATER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trees and shrubs.• Living Christmas trees (after use) that are adapted to the area's climate and soils.• Spring bulbs, including tulips and hyacinths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any areas that have become dry to help protect against winter cold injury.
FERTILIZE	PEST CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greenhouse plants with bat guano or earthworm castings and other organic fertilizers.• Houseplants, with earthworm castings and lava sand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bark aphids on trees: no treatment needed.• Scale insects on shade and fruit trees: dormant oil.• Cut mistletoe out of trees. Remove infested limbs if possible.• Spray houseplants to control scale, mealybugs, spider mites, and other insects.• Remember that henbit, clover, and other wildflowers are beautiful, so don't worry about spraying them.
PRUNE	ODD JOBS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peaches, plums, and other fruit trees; just prior to bud break is ideal.• Apples, to remove vertical shoots.• Evergreens, to adjust the appearance.• Shade trees, to remove dead and damaged wood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick tomatoes the night before first freeze.• Clean and oil tools before storing for winter.• Run mower and trimmer engines dry of gasoline; drain and change oil. Take to repair shop now to avoid the spring rush.• Mulch all bare soil.• Turn compost piles.• Feed the birds!