

Garden Check-List For Harrison County and all of East Texas



Sorted by month

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January

- ✓The life of the flowering pot plant received as a Christmas gift can be prolonged with proper care. Keep the plant out of range of heating ducts and away from heating units. Keep in a cool room at night, preferably at 60 to 65 degrees F.
- ✓Now is an excellent time to transplant mature or established trees and shrubs.
- ✓Be sure to prune back the top of established trees and shrubs before moving. Remove about one-third to one-half of the top to compensate for roots lost in digging.
- ✓Plan your flower and vegetable garden now before the rush of spring planting.
- ✓Sow seeds in flats or containers in protected structures to establish growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias, and slow-growing transplants should be sown in early January. Warm-temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and periwinkles should be sown later in January or February.
- ✓Put a light application of fertilizer on established pansy plants. Use one-half pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 square feet of bed area. Repeat the application every 4 to 6 weeks. Dried blood meal or cottonseed meal are also excellent sources of fertilizer for pansies. Be sure to water well after applying fertilizers.
- ✓Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting.
- ✓Select and order gladiolus corms for February and March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.
- ✓Check junipers and other narrow-leaf evergreens for bagworms in pouches; if left on the plants, the worms can start their cycle again by emerging from the pouches in the spring and feeding on the foliage. Removing the pouches by hand and burning them is an excellent means of reducing the potential damage next spring.
- ✓Rose pruning in South Texas may be done in January. Remember that climbers and other once-blooming roses are best pruned after the spring flowers have faded.
- ✓The Harrison-Gregg County Master Gardener Class starts this month!



February

- ✓ Don't fertilize newly set out trees or shrubs until after they have started to grow, and then only very lightly, the first year.
- ✓ When buying plants, the biggest is not always the best, especially with bare-rooted plants. The medium to small sized (4 to 6 feet) usually become established faster and will become effective in the landscape more quickly than the large sizes.
- ✓ Complete the bare-root planting of woody landscape plants this month. Container and ball-and-burlapped plants are in good supply and can be set out most any time. Winter and early spring planting provides an opportunity for good establishment before hot weather comes.
- ✓ Prune roses during February except in the Panhandle and far North Texas, where roses are pruned in March or April. Use good shears that will make clean cuts. Remove dead, dying, and weak canes. Leave four to eight healthy canes and remove approximately one-half of the top growth along the height of the plant.
- ✓ Now is an excellent time to select and plant container-grown roses to fill in bare spots in your rose garden.
- ✓ Wait until after they finish flowering before pruning spring-flowering shrubs such as quince, azalea, forsythia and spiraea.
- ✓ When pruning shrubs, follow these steps: (1) prune out any dead or damaged branches first; (2) thin out by removing about one-third of the canes or stems at ground level, removing the oldest canes only; (3) shape the rest of the plant but do not cut everything back to the same height.
- ✓ Plant dahlia tubers in late February and early March.
- ✓ Plant gladiolus corms; space planting dates at two-week intervals to extend flowering season.
- ✓ Fertilize pansies once again for continued flowering. Don't forget to water when needed.
- ✓ A potted plant, tree, shrub, or cut flowers make excellent Valentine gifts for loved ones and shut-ins.



March

- ✓ Prepare beds for planting flowers and vegetables. You may want to consider renting or buying a garden tiller to speed up the process; however, a strong back and a garden fork will still do an excellent job.
- ✓ For every 100 square feet of bed area, work in a several-inch layer of either compost, pine bark or sphagnum peat moss, plus 5 pounds of balanced fertilizer.
- ✓ Check with your local county agent for the average last killing freeze date for your area. Remember that killing freezes can occur after this date. **(March 15th)**
- ✓ Pruning of evergreens and summer flowering trees and shrubs should be completed in early March. Prune spring flowering trees and shrubs as soon as they finish blooming.
- ✓ Select and order caladium tubers as well as geranium and coleus plants for late April and early May planting. Do not plant caladiums until soil temperature reaches 70 F.
- ✓ As camellia and azalea plants finish blooming, fertilize them with three pounds of azalea-camellia fertilizer. Check mulch on azalea and camellia beds and add where needed.
- ✓ In North Texas there is still time to plant seeds of your favorite annuals in flats to be transplanted out-of-doors when danger of frost is past.
- ✓ Beware of close-out sales on bare-root trees and shrubs. The chance of survival is rather low on bare-root plants this late in the season. Your best bet at this time of year is to depend on container-grown or balled-and-burlapped plants for landscape use.
- ✓ Start hanging baskets of petunias and other annuals for another dimension in landscape color.
- ✓ Plant dahlia tubers in fertile, well-drained soil.
- ✓ Be sure and attend the Annual Harrison County Master Gardener Plant Sale.
- ✓ Dig and divide summer and fall flowering perennials just before they initiate their spring growth.



April / May

- ✓ Prune spring-flowering shrubs soon after flowering. Keep the natural shape of the plant in mind as you prune, and avoid excessive cutting except where necessary to control size.
- ✓ Roses have high fertilizer requirements. For most soils, use a complete fertilizer for the first application just as new growth starts, then use ammonium sulfate, or other high nitrogen source, every 4 to 6 weeks, usually just as the new growth cycle starts following a flowering cycle.
- ✓ Continue to spray rose varieties susceptible to black spot, using an appropriate fungicidal spray such as Funginex. Use every 7 to 10 days, or as recommended.
- ✓ Climbing hybrid tea roses may be pruned as soon as they complete flowering.
- ✓ Removing spent flowers, trimming back excessive growth, and applying fertilizer to an established bed can do wonders towards rejuvenating and extending the life of the planting.
- ✓ As soon as azaleas have finished flowering, apply an acid type fertilizer at the rate recommended. Don't over fertilize, as azalea roots are near the surface and damage can occur. Water thoroughly after fertilizing.
- ✓ Seeds of amaranthus, celosia, cosmos, marigold, portulaca, zinnia, and other warm-season annuals can be sown directly in the beds where they are to grow. Keep seeded areas moist until seeds germinate. Thin out as soon as they are large enough to transplant. Surplus plants can be transplanted to other areas.
- ✓ It will soon be time for bagworms to attack junipers and other narrow-leaved evergreens. Light infestations may be controlled by hand picking and burning. Control measures such as Sevin dust or spray, should be applied while the insects and the bags are about one-half inch in length.
- ✓ For instant color, purchase started annual plants. Select short, compact plants. Any flowers or flower buds should be pinched to give plants an opportunity to become established.
- ✓ Check new tender growth for aphids. A few can be tolerated, but large numbers should be controlled. Always follow label instructions on approved pesticides for control.
- ✓ Many flower or vegetable seeds left over after planting the garden can be saved for the next season by closing the packets with tape or paper clips and storing in a sealed glass jar in your refrigerator.
- ✓ Start weeding early in the flower garden. Early competition with small plants can delay flowering. A mulch will discourage weed growth and make those that do come through easier to pull.
- ✓ Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas, and containers should be examined closely. Often, nut grass and other weeds, nematodes, and soilborne disease are brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.
- ✓ Watch newspaper and other publicity for information regarding wildflower trails, and plan to take a trip to enjoy this beautiful natural resource.

June

- ✓ Check plants for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Select a chemical or organic control, or use insecticidal soap.
- ✓ Supplemental irrigation is essential for many ornamental plants such as coleus, caladium, geranium, dahlia, azalea, and camellia during the hot, dry summer days ahead. Water lawn and garden thoroughly, but not too frequently.
- ✓ During the summer, soil moisture becomes extremely important and essential for good plant production. A good mulch will retain valuable moisture needed for plant growth, and improve overall gardening success. Mulches are usually applied 2 to 6 inches deep, depending on the material used.
- ✓ There is still time to plant some of the colorful, heat-tolerant summer annuals. Direct-seed zinnias and portulaca, and purchase plants of periwinkle, salvia, marigold, and purslane. Be sure to water transplants as needed until roots become established.
- ✓ Removing faded flowers from plants before they set seed will keep them growing and producing flowers. A light application of fertilizer every 4 to 6 weeks will also be helpful.
- ✓ House plants can be moved out of doors this month. Sink the pots in a cool, shaded garden bed to prevent them from drying out so quickly. Water pots, container plants, and hanging baskets often.
- ✓ Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once the bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every 3 to 4 years.
- ✓ June is the time to select daylily varieties as they reach their peak of bloom.
- ✓ Fertilize roses every 4 to 6 weeks. Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer immediately after a flush of bloom.
- ✓ Continue to spray susceptible roses with a black-spot control such as Funginex every 7 to 10 days.
- ✓ Re-blooming salvias, such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. Farinacea*, should be pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier, use hedging shears, and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below.



July /August

- ✓ Caladiums require plenty of water at this time of year if they are to remain lush and active until fall. Fertilize with 21-0-0 at the rate of 1/3 to 1/2 pounds per 100 square feet of bed area and water thoroughly.
- ✓ Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture. Hollies will frequently drop their fruit under drought conditions.
- ✓ Prune dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning from now until mid-winter. Severe pruning now will only stimulate tender new growth prior to frost.
- ✓ In August, sow seeds of snapdragons, dianthus, pansies, calendulas, and other winter flowers in flats for planting outside in mid- to late fall.
- ✓ It's time to divide spring flowering plants such as irises, Shasta daisies, ox-eye daisies, gaillardias, cannas, daylilies, violets, liriopes, and ajugas.
- ✓ Plant bluebonnet seeds in August. This winter annual must germinate in late summer or early fall, develop a good root system, and be ready to grow in spring when the weather warms. Plant the seeds in well prepared soil, 1/2 inch deep, and water thoroughly.
- ✓ Make your selections and place your orders for spring flowering bulbs to arrive in time for planting in October and November.
- ✓ Mid-summer pruning of rose bushes can be beneficial. Prune out dead canes and any weak, brushy-type growth. Cut back tall, vigorous bushes to about 30 inches. After pruning, apply a complete fertilizer, and water thoroughly. If a preventive disease-control program has been maintained, your rose bushes should be ready to provide an excellent crop of flowers this fall.
- ✓ Establish a new compost pile for the fall leaf accumulation.
- ✓ Picking flowers frequently encourages most annuals and perennials to flower even more abundantly.
- ✓ It is not too late to set out another planting of many warm-season annuals such as marigolds, zinnias, and periwinkles. They will require extra attention for the first few weeks but should provide color during late September, October, and November.



September

- ✓ Coleus and caladiums require plenty of water this time of year if they are to remain lush and attractive until fall. Fertilize with ammonium sulfate at the rate of 1/3 to 1/2 pound per 100 square feet of bed area, and water thoroughly.
- ✓ Rejuvenate heat-stressed geraniums and begonias for the fall season by lightly pruning, fertilizing and watering.
- ✓ Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture. Hollies will frequently drop their fruit under drought conditions. Some vegetables such as cucumbers or eggplants also become bitter if underwatered during peak growing times.
- ✓ Remove weak, unproductive growth and old seed heads from crape myrtles and roses to stimulate new growth for fall beauty.
- ✓ Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning until mid-winter. Pruning now may stimulate tender new growth prior to frost.
- ✓ Sow seeds of snapdragons, pinks, pansies and other winter flowers in flats for planting outside during mid-to-late fall.
- ✓ Prepare the beds for spring-flowering bulbs as soon as possible. It's important to cultivate the soil and add generous amounts of organic matter to improve water drainage. Bulbs will rot without proper drainage.
- ✓ Continue a disease spray schedule on roses as blackspot and mildew can be extremely damaging in September and October.
- ✓ Christmas cactus can be made to flower by supplying 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness and cool nights (55 degrees F) for a month starting in mid-October. Keep plants on the dry side for a month prior to the treatment.
- ✓ Plan to plant wildflowers in early September and October. Check supplies now and order seed for planting in open sunny areas. Consider bluebonnet, Indian paintbrush, coneflower, fire-wheel, black-eyed Susan, evening primrose and many others. Soils should be lightly cultivated prior to planting.
- ✓ Divide spring flowering perennials such as iris, Shasta daisy, gaillardia, rudbeckias, cannas, daylilies, violets, liriopse and ajuga.



October

- ✓October is a good time to reduce the insect and disease potential in next year's garden. Clean up the garden, removing all annuals that have completed their life cycle. Remove the tops of all herbaceous perennials that have finished flowering or as soon as frost has killed the leaves.
- ✓October through November is also an excellent time to purchase bulbs while you still have a good selection in the garden center.
- ✓Chill tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator until mid or late December before planting. The lower part of the refrigerator is best. Do not leave bulbs in airtight plastic bags during refrigerated storage.
- ✓Plant bulbs in well prepared beds so the base of the bulb is at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb. In sandy soil, set slightly deeper and in clay soils less deeply.
- ✓Holly plants with a heavy set of fruit often suffer a fertilizer deficiency. An application of complete fertilizer late this month can be helpful and provide a head start next spring.
- ✓Start collecting leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6 inch layer of leaves may be covered with several inches of soil. Always wet the layer of leaves thoroughly before adding the soil. Add about one pound of a complete lawn or garden fertilizer to each layer of leaves to provide the necessary nitrogen for decomposition.
- ✓In addition to bulbs, check your nursery or garden center for started plants of snapdragons, pinks, sweet williams, poppies, and calendulas. Planted now in south and east Texas, they will usually provide a riot of spring color; wait until late winter or early spring to plant in north Texas.
- ✓Keep Christmas cactus in a sunny spot where night temperatures can be kept below 65 degrees F. Buds will drop if you allow night temperatures to go above 70 degrees F or if you allow the plant to become excessively dry. They should also be kept in total darkness from 5:00 pm until 8:00 am for about 30 days in October to initiate flower buds.
- ✓If you have saved seeds of your favorite plants, allow them to become air dry, then place them in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator. Be sure to label each packet carefully. Remember, seed from hybrid plants will seldom resemble the parent plant.
- ✓Prepare beds for planting pansies when they become available at the garden centers. They need a well-drained soil and exposure to at least a half-day of sun. It is best to use started plants, as seeds are difficult to handle.
- ✓If you are planning to save caladium tubers for another year, dig them in late October, and allow to dry in a well ventilated but shady area. After 7 to 10 days remove leaves and dirt, then pack in dry peat moss, vermiculite or similar material for storage. Pack tubers so they do not touch each other. Dust with all-purpose fungicide as you pack. Place container in an area where temperature won't drop below 50 degrees F.



November / December

- ✓ Gourds on display for fall decorations will last longer if they are carefully cleaned, waxed and kept in a dry place. Inspect occasionally for signs of mould.
- ✓ Prolong the life of holiday-season gift plants by providing proper care. Check to see if the pot wrap has plugged up the bottom drainage. Don't over-water. Keep out of drafts from heating vents and open doorways. Fertilizer is seldom needed the first few months.
- ✓ Berrying plants, such as holly and yaupon, may be pruned now while they can be enjoyed as cut material inside the house.
- ✓ Place orders for seeds this month so you will have them available when you are ready to plant. By ordering early, you will be more certain of getting the varieties you want.
- ✓ Don't get in a hurry to prune woody plants. Late December through February is usually the best time to prune them.
- ✓ Drain gasoline from power tools and run the engine until fuel in the carburetor is used up.
- ✓ Drain and store garden hoses and watering equipment in a readily accessible location. The lawn and plants may need water during a prolonged dry spell.
- ✓ November through February is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. In the Panhandle, planting is often delayed until February or early March.
- ✓ Continue to set out cool-season bedding plants, such as pansies, violas, stock, snapdragons, and dianthus.
- ✓ Prepare beds and individual holes for rose planting in January and February. Use composted manure, pine bark, and similar materials mixed with existing soil.
- ✓ Plant those spring-flowering bulbs if you haven't already done so.
- ✓ Want to start cuttings of your favorite Christmas cactus? As soon as it has finished blooming, select a cutting with 4 or 5 joints, break or cut it off, and insert the basal end into a pot of moderately moist soil. Place it on a windowsill or other brightly lit area. The cuttings should be rooted within 3 to 4 weeks.
- ✓ Be sure and register for the Master Gardener Class that will start in January of next year!

