

# “What’s Growing On...”

Volume 22 Number 4 Winter 2019 Edition Published Quarterly



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## RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ON THE RADIO

For agriculture news and horticultural tips, listen to me, Pam Burton, on the RCE Agricultural Program on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday on SNJ Today 99.9 FM announcing local workshops, seminars, and horticultural tips.

## Upcoming Master Gardener Classes in 2020

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County is pleased to be offering the 2020 Home Horticulture/Master Gardener classes from February 2020 through June 2020. Enclosed in this newsletter you will find details about the dates, times, topics, and instructors. Information can be found on pages 9-10 with detailed explanations of the 2020 Master Gardener Program and classes.

You are always welcome to take the “traditional” route, and commit to the Master Gardener program as an intern from the start and we always appreciate that level of commitment. However, we are offering another option this year. Bundle up and save! Buy one and get the second one at one-half price when committing to the program and full course of classes with a friend.

If you are interested in attending the classes, but aren’t ready to commit to becoming a Master Gardener intern, you can attend the 20 classes and make your decision about becoming an intern later. The non-refundable pre-paid cost for all 20 classes is a considerable savings at \$210.00. Taken individually, each class is \$20.00 which totals \$400.00. Classes are from 9 am – 12 noon. For the gardener who has everything, this could be the perfect gift!

Application, registration, and more information at [HomeHort.Eventbrite.com](https://www.HomeHort.Eventbrite.com) by January 15, 2020. For more information please feel free to call Pam at 856-451-2800, Ext 4 or email me at [pamelabu@co.cumberland.nj.us](mailto:pamelabu@co.cumberland.nj.us). We hope to see you at these educational classes, taught by experts in their field.

And so it goes,

*Pam Burton*

## Master Gardener Class Pricing

**Each Class**

**\$20**

**Full Course**

**\$210**

**Full Course With A Friend**

**\$315**

## D.I.Y.

**For the Birds:** You can make a bird seed wreath at home by spraying the inside of a bundt pan with non-stick cooking spray. Mix 3/4 cup all-purpose flour, 1/2 cup warm water, 3 tablespoons light corn syrup, 1 package unflavored gelatin, and 4 cups bird food, such as seeds, peanuts, berries, dried fruits. Put it in the freezer to harden up and then hang it outside as a treat for the birds!

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/fresh\\_treats\\_for\\_the\\_birds\\_during\\_winter](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/fresh_treats_for_the_birds_during_winter)



**Garden Journaling:** January is a good time of year to pull out the past years' garden journals and see if you made any notes for this upcoming season. Whether you enjoy the feel of a journal in your hands as you record your entries or appreciate the efficiency of a computer entry, you will find that through the years, patterns will develop and will help you with planting decisions. If you include pictures, you will be able to see some plants flourish and some plants decline, giving you the knowledge to avoid repeating mistakes!

<https://extension.psu.edu/garden-journaling>

**O Tannenbaum:** Christmas trees come in all shapes and sizes and if you visit some of the area gardens, you're likely to see themed trees done in colors we don't normally associate with Christmas or fanciful trees of all nutcrackers. Most homes tend to decorate more traditionally with ornaments accumulated throughout the years that most likely have some special significance or memory that is re-visited as it is hung. Santa ornaments made from oyster shells is a thoughtful gift, especially if the shells were collected locally during warmer summer months!



**Garland:** In days gone by there was a tradition in Germany to put sliced apples on trees. Over the years, as Germans migrated to America they brought their traditions with them and that morphed into even more foods being hung from the trees, including the ever-popular popcorn and cranberry garland. Many people make their garlands using needle and thread, but I like to use a spool of wire. It's an inexpensive way to make a tree more festive.

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/gifts\\_from\\_the\\_kitchen\\_popcorn\\_garland](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/gifts_from_the_kitchen_popcorn_garland)

**Terrarium:** Still looking for that perfect gift for the person who has everything? Give some thought to a DIY terrarium kit, complete with plants, container, soil, moss and maybe something small that will remind them of you. Choose plants that will grow well together and require the same light and water needs. For instance, you don't want to mix succulents with ferns. It might look pretty, but one of them won't make it. From a design perspective, consider the height of the plants and add various leaf textures, colors and shapes for visual interest. The flowers will come and go, but the leaves will always remain a part of the design.

**Vermicomposting:** We have a vermicomposting bin at the Extension Education Center and regularly, Master Gardeners stop by to feed the worms with table scraps and tend to other needs of the bin. Rutgers Fact Sheet 805, *Vermicomposting*, also referred to as Worm Composting, assures us that you don't have to have a bin specifically designed for vermicomposting to make worm compost. Plus, the kids seem to love it while learning the natural process of decomposition and the life cycle of the organisms involved.



**Bee Hotel:** Rutgers Fact Sheet 1280, *Supporting Bees in Your Garden and on Your Farm*, states "...Bees are critical pollinators of 2/3 of the crops we eat and of most of the world's flowering plant species and many crops depend as much on wild bees as they do on honeybees..." One of the ways to help support the population of cavity-nesters is to build nest boxes, also called bee hotels. There's quite an art and a science to building these, and some of the considerations are the design and materials selection, the actual construction, the location of the finished hotel, and finally, there is ongoing maintenance and monitoring.

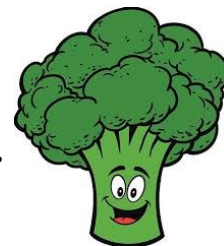
<https://pollinators.msu.edu/publications/building-and-managing-bee-hotels-for-wild-bees/>

## Smart Gardening



**Get Winter Ready:** As winter comes upon us and you are getting your garden ready be sure to bring in all of your garden hoses, as well as any pots and containers that could get damaged by the winter weather. It's time to put away the mower and perform the due diligence of repairs, changing belts and sharpening blades so you are ready to start again come springtime. Give your tools some TLC and put them away clean and organized so you can tell what you need for next year!

**Vegetables & Fruits/Berries:** If you are wondering when to start your vegetable seeds indoors, there are 2 Rutgers Fact Sheets that are great to reference in tandem to help resolve that question. An example is, Rutgers Fact Sheet 129, *Planning a Vegetable Garden*, tells us that broccoli works well as a transplant and recommends the months of planting as April, May, July, and August. If you want to plant them in April, refer to Rutgers Fact Sheet 787, *Starting Vegetable Seeds Indoors*, to find out that broccoli does transplant well and it takes 6-7 weeks to grow. Do the math and you will find that you can start your broccoli seeds indoors in mid to late February.



**Plan Your Garden:** Rutgers Fact Sheet 129, *Planning a Vegetable Garden*, recommends planning your garden so that the tallest growing crops such as corn, okra and sunflowers are located on the north side of the garden so they won't shade lower growing plants. This goes for the trellised vines, such as peas and beans, as well. Other important considerations are the amount of sunlight required and the drainage of the soil. Be mindful of nearby trees and buildings that can shade the garden!

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/home-vegetable-gardening-a-quick-reference-guide>

**Be Creative:** When you are planning your gardens during these cold winter months, be sure to utilize the space you have as efficiently as possible, going vertical with plants that will adapt to being trellised. These include grape vines, squashes, pole beans, some peas, tomatoes and most cucumbers. Get creative with your potential support structures and at the same time add some whimsy to the garden. If you have an old bicycle that you've been meaning to take to the dump, give it a bright coat of paint and let the viny cardinal flowers do their thing!

[https://www.arec.umd.edu/sites/arec.umd.edu/files/images/uploaded/4\\_VerticalGardening%20\(WIA\).pdf](https://www.arec.umd.edu/sites/arec.umd.edu/files/images/uploaded/4_VerticalGardening%20(WIA).pdf)

**Think Ahead:** Rutgers Fact Sheet 1163, *Mail Order Vegetable Seed Sources for the New Jersey Gardener*, provides a reference listing companies which sell vegetable seeds by mail order. The listing is not all inclusive. While it seems like a long time away, keep your vacation dates in mind when planning your vegetable garden and try to time it so that your garden is not in full harvest while you are away.



**Buy Ahead and Save:** If you've saved seeds from packets purchased a couple of years ago, do yourself a favor and check the germination. This is especially true for sweet corn, onions, leeks, parsnip and spinach. The amount of cost for new packets could far outweigh the level of disappointment if the seeds are not viable. Many annual flower seeds only have a one year viability, as well.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/how-long-do-garden-seeds-last>

**Companion Planting:** Simply put, companion planting is the practice of planting two or more plant species close together to gain benefits either on growth, flavor or pest control. One of the oldest examples of companion gardening is often referred to as the Native American "Three Sisters Garden". The "Three Sisters" are corn, beans and pumpkin or squash planted together in groups on hills. However, there are more examples of landscaping that have been tried with some success. Tomato horn worms seem to prefer dill better than tomatoes, so try trapping them that way. Marigolds produce thiopene which deters harmful nematodes, so plant them among the vegetable garden rows. Many companion plants provide attractive environments for beneficial insects such as pollinators and predator species (lady beetles and lacewings) that help reduce pest populations. Plants in the Umbel family (carrots, parsley, dill) are known for this, as is sweet alyssum. Plan ahead for good garden companions.

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/master-gardener/counties/susquehanna/penn-state-master-gardener-articles/good-neighbors-make-good-gardens-companion-planting>

**Interplanting:** Interplanting is an example of intensive planting and requires proper planning but the results are an increase in production and a decrease in weeds. Take the time now to plan and consider planting a short-season, quick-maturing crop like radishes with long-season, slow-maturing plant like peppers. Smaller plants like beets can also be planted at the base of larger plants like broccoli. And shade tolerant plants like lettuce, spinach and celery can be interplanted in the shadows of beans or squash. You can also mix edibles with ornamentals like swiss chard amidst the azalea shrubs. Get the most of your land and let it work for you with some forethought and planning.



<https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/images/uploaded/100%20Sq%20Ft%20Garden%202014%20PPT%20-FINAL%20Mar%2024.pdf>

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/16-vegetable-gardening>

<https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/cass/Intensive%20Gardening%20Techniques.pdf>



**Strawberries:** Rutgers Fact Sheet 097, *Growing Strawberries in the Home Garden*, recommends to overwinter your strawberry bed by covering it. Cover it with clean straw mulch 4" deep to protect the plants from severe cold, fluctuating temperatures, and soil heaving, once the plants have become dormant, typically in early to mid-December. The straw mulch should be free of weeds and with mature grain heads. The mulch can be re-used and recycled come spring when the plant resumes growth by removing the straw from on top of the bed to the side of the row where it will then serve as a mulch to block weeds and keep berries clean.

**Perennials and flowers:** Check your perennials in February for frost heaving, which is where the soil expands and contracts, heaving the plant's crown and roots out of the soil and exposing the roots to the elements. If you notice that has happened place soil around the base of any exposed plant, and carefully tamp it back into the ground but take care not to push too hard or you could further damage the plant. Cover the plant with a mulch of straw or pine needles to help prevent further freezing and thawing.

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/news/2006/mar/070202.htm>



If you are following the recommendations on Rutgers Fact Sheets 1155, *Cannas*, and 1153, *Growing Dahlias*, you will note that January is a good time to take a look at the rhizomes and tubers that you are overwintering and add a few drops of moisture if they appear dry. Don't overdo it, though or they will rot! It's amazing to think that such beautiful flowers will come from the gnarly rhizomes and tubers!

**Landscaping:** Mice and meadow voles are looking for warm places to live in the winter and if you have over-mulched the trees on your property, Rutgers Fact Sheet 099, *Problems With Over-Mulching Trees and Shrubs*, points out that these rodents may chew on the nutritious inner bark. If the tree is girdled by over 50% there may not be any hope for saving the plant. This could go unnoticed until the following spring, so best to check on them now and pull back the mulch from the trees and visually look for the presence of a root flare.



## Winteresting plants



**Paperbush:** *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, is a perfect choice for your winter garden with winter blooming flowers that provide a strong sweet and spicy fragrance. This deciduous shrub reaches about 7 feet tall and likes partial shade with moist, rich soil. The branches can be cut for forcing indoors, as well. Paperbush is a shrub that provides other seasons of interest with a wonderful shape and form and foliage that is pretty from spring through fall.

<https://today.duke.edu/2012/01/dukegardens>

<https://extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu/extgardener-edgeworthia-lends-blooms-and-fragrance-to-winter/>



**Vernal Witchhazel:** *Hamamelis vernalis*, is a shrub that is often used in winter gardens with fragrant flowers that bloom in winter. The petals of the flowers seem to curl backward giving them an unusual look. The flowers do extend on warmer days and then withdraw on the coldest of days to prevent freezing. Plant the vernal witch hazel in full sun with loamy moist soil. Snowdrops and winter aconite do well planted beneath the shelter of the flowering vernal witch hazel.

<https://cdn.canr.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads>

[sites/16/2018/04/12024402/2010 Witch Hazel Hamamelis Feature.pdf](sites/16/2018/04/12024402/2010%20Witch%20Hazel%20Hamamelis%20Feature.pdf)

<https://hvp.osu.edu/pocketgardener/source/description/hamamelis.html>



**Winter Daphne:** *Daphne odora*, is a small evergreen shrub that is found in winter gardens. Word of caution, be aware that this plant is highly poisonous. Having said that, it has beautiful clusters of pink flowers that are extremely fragrant. Winter daphne likes sun to partial shade with moist well-drained soil and will put up with winters' fickle weather although it does help to put it in a protected area and will work well on a patio or deck. The foliage also provides interest with creamy margined leaves.

<https://today.duke.edu/2012/01/dukegardens>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/daphne-odora/>

<https://extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu/extgardener-winter-daphne-tickles-springs-fancy/>



**Espaliers:** Espaliers date back to at least the 15th century and the art of pruning trees as espaliers is still being practiced to this day. Selective pruning is done to make the tree grow two dimensionally and many times the specimen is grown vertically against the backdrop of a wall. While many varieties can be used, apple trees lend themselves well to an espalier. One of the most common patterns is tiered where horizontal branches are trained in opposite directions along wire supports. Keep in mind, creating an espalier takes time and patience but the payoff will be a stunning creation.

<https://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/espalier.html>

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/2015/07/training-fruit-tree-espalier-takes-good-dash-dedication>

<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/pnw400.pdf>

**Wintersweet:** *Chimonanthus praecox*, is a good choice for a winter garden. This large deciduous shrub grows to about 12 feet and can become leggy with age if not pruned after flowering. It is the lovely and fragrant yellow flowers which bloom in February that lends this shrub its' common name. Wintersweet likes sun to light shade and needs good drainage. On a mild winter day in February one plant can provide aroma to a large part of the winter garden.

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/chimonanthus-praecox/>

<https://today.duke.edu/2012/01/dukegardens>

**Wintergreen:** *Gaultheria procumbens* is a slow-growing evergreen which forms a mat on forest floors. Wintergreen is native to North America and when crushed the leaves do emit a wintergreen smell. Propagation is done by seed or division of clumps. Amongst its' many attributes are the long-lasting and showy red berries. Wintergreen prefers a site that has light to moderate shade with acidic, evenly moist organically enriched soil. It prefers cool summers and won't tolerate drought. Think of a woodland setting and that's where wintergreen likes to live. These conditions can be hard to replicate and that can be the most challenging part of growing this plant.

<http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/detail.php?pid=189>

<http://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=148>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/gaultheria-procumbens/>

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1140/>





**Redstem Dogwood:** *Cornus sericea*, has bright red stems which are often used in holiday decorating. However, for those that like a more untraditional look, use a lesser known variety of *Cornus sericea* called 'Flaviramea' with stems that turn bright yellow in winter instead of red. Whether red or yellow, use the lengthy stems as the thriller in your outdoor containers, or mix them in with your tree decoration and designs.

**Hollyleaved Barberry:** *Mahonia aquifolium*, is a broad leaved evergreen that likes average soil and prefers sun to partial shade. This moderate grower reaches a height of about 8 feet and is drought tolerant. Like most evergreens it likes a protected site in the winter to help prevent dessication. My favorite part of this shrub is the clusters of blue and black berries that persist from fall through part of winter. This plant may get a bad rap due to the barberry part of its' name, but don't confuse it with Japanese barberry. This one's a keeper.



**Northern Bayberry:** *Myrica pensylvanica* is a plant often associated with the holidays. Bayberry is a tough plant that thrives in all soil types, including dry or moist and it can take full sun to partial shade. This shrub is a rapid grower and reaches a height of 5 to 8 feet. Rutgers Bulletin 271, *Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance*, lists it as a shrub that is rarely damaged by deer. Bayberry isn't necessarily a showy plant, but it has aromatic leaves and subtle greyish white berries that persist through winter.

<https://extension.umd.edu/learn/northern-bayberry>

<https://hvp.osu.edu/pocketgardener/source/description/mahonia-aquifolium.html>

<http://hort.uconn.edu/detail.php?pid=128>

**Dogwood Trees:** Bunchberry Dogwood, *Cornus canadensis*, is a wonderful alternative for a groundcover reaching a height of only 3 to 6 inches at a slow growth rate. Bunchberry Dogwood enjoys acidic to average soil and requires partial sun to shade and it produces white flowers in the spring and red berries in the fall. There are two other types dogwoods; the Flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*, and the Redstem Dogwood, *Cornus sericea*.

## Take it Inside



**Carnations:** Carnation is the birth flower for January and is perfect for arrangements. They remain one of the most reasonable flowers to purchase and are long-lasting in an arrangement. Use clean vases and recut the flower stems before replacing the water. Keep them away from direct sunlight and drafts or heat sources. Floral preservative will help the longevity of your arrangement as well. When arranging the carnations, remove any leaves that will be below the water line.

<https://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/carn.html>

**Ferns:** Ferns can offer a respite of green in the cold dreary winter months. There are lots of options to choose from and most do best with indirect lighting such as a north-facing window during the winter months. They enjoy an average of 65 to 75 degrees and want consistent watering, but not too wet. To help with humidity, ferns can be double potted or misted in the winter. They don't need to be fertilized during winter months and are not prone to plant diseases, though you will need to check for insects weekly.

<http://www.uvm.edu/pss/ppp/articles/fernsin.html>



**Tillandsia:** Whether you know it or not, the chances are high that you've seen Tillandsia used in some way, shape or form within the past year, including bridal bouquets, in glass globes hung from the ceiling or attached to a piece of wood for visual interest. Tillandsias are epiphytes and do not require soil to grow. What they do require is bright, but not direct sun, good air circulation and water. Water by misting or by a weekly rinsing is recommended and once a month you can use a liquid fertilizer diluted to one-fourth the suggested dose and apply it with the regular watering process.

<https://extension.psu.edu/tillandsia-air-plants>



## Home for the Holidays



**Poinsettias:** We all know poinsettias are popular holiday flowers, so here's a few tips for keeping them looking great throughout the season. Protect your plant with a loose-fitting bag when transporting it home especially if it's below 50 degrees or windy outside. Take the foil or paper sleeve off. Leaving it on can cause the leaves to drop. Display them in an area that is not too cold or not too hot. Water only when the soil feels dry to the touch and no need to fertilize them while they are in bloom!

For those plant enthusiasts who just cannot throw out a living plant, including the leftover poinsettias, once the holiday is over, check the plant for any signs of insects, such as whitefly. Poinsettias are very prone to whitefly, and once they are infested, whiteflies are difficult to control, so you may have to reconsider that decision to keep the plant. Likewise, if the poinsettia is becoming long and leggy, you can cut it back to about five inches tall.

<https://extension.psu.edu/poinsettias>

<https://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/poinsett.htm>

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/faq/small-white-insects-flutter-about-my-poinsettia-when-i-water-plant-what-are-they-and-how-do-i>



**Holiday safety:** Many homeowners start their holiday decorations earlier each year and if you are one of them, be sure to keep a few thoughts in mind. Fresh evergreens dry out in the heat of homes and can become flammable. A few suggestions will help keep them as fresh as possible. First, fully hydrate the greenery and allow it to dry, then spray it with an anti-transpirant to help seal in moisture. When decorating, try to keep the greens in a cooler place and never near candles. Be prepared to change out the evergreens if they become brittle to the touch.

In your holiday decorating, use caution and consideration of children and pets when choosing berries as part of your holiday décor. Keep all berries out of the reach of children and pets. Some of the most beautiful berries are also on the list that are considered poisonous. These include holly, yews, mistletoe, ivy plants, Jerusalem cherry, bittersweet, snowberry, and crown of thorns. Nandina has been reported to cause problems for curious cats. If you are in doubt, call the American Association of Poison Control Centers at 1-800-222-1222

<https://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/2013/12/259947/>

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/holiday-decorating-with-fresh-greenery/>

**Holiday décor:** Rutgers Fact Sheet 1215, *Outdoor Container Gardening with Flowering and Foliage Plants*, recommends a common and very successful design recipe, commonly called "thrillers, fillers and spillers," which combines a tall central focal plant, plants surrounding, and trailing plants to spill over and soften the edges of the container. While the strong upright thriller lines suggest vitality, the arching spiller lines are restful. This concept can be used for decorating outdoor containers for the holiday season. Try tall stems with berries like winterberry, add some greens around it, like magnolia leaves, and use leylandii cypress to spill over. You can add large pinecones for a festive touch!

This time of the year you will find rosemary topiaries that have been pruned to look like mini Christmas trees show up on the shelves of stores. Buyer beware that growing this plant indoors can require some care, especially because they may have come straight from a greenhouse. First, remove any wrapping and check the pot for drainage holes. Place the plant in full sun and regularly rotate it, so all sides get the sunlight. You would be best to put it on a tray filled with pebbles and add water to increase humidity. Water well only when the plant feels on the dry side and take care not to overwater.



**Larch trees:** The Larch tree also commonly known as the tamarack is a deciduous evergreen meaning that it loses its' needles in autumn, leaving wonderful clusters of small stiff cones along the twigs and branches. These branches can be fashioned and wired into a wreath for the holidays which has a gnarly, wild, and wooly look to it and is unique and different than the traditional holiday wreath made of greens.

<http://bhort.bh.cornell.edu/tree/larch.htm>

<https://extension.umd.edu/learn/rosemary-care-indoors>

<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/rosemary-topiary.html>

**Hot cocoa:** As you sip your yummy hot cocoa while the winter winds blow, keep in mind that the cocoa comes from the fruit of a tree called *Theobroma cacao*, which translates to "food of the gods." In its' raw state, chocolate looks like melon-like pods which grow directly on the trunk and branches. Each pod has about 40 cocoa beans. They are fermented, dried, and roasted before they make it to our mugs as hot cocoa with whipped cream on top.



When you are working your way through the seed catalogs, keep a few pointers in mind. First and foremost remember that the plant shown is a full grown plant, so don't expect that same result immediately. Pay attention to the descriptive wording. Vigorous could mean the plant takes over the garden while tall means it will need staking. Be prepared to fertilize if a plant is a heavy feeder. If it is described as a 'delicate flower' you may need a magnifying glass to see them!

<http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/garden-jargon-in-seed-catalogs-and-packets/>

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/plant\\_science\\_at\\_your\\_dinner\\_table\\_hot\\_chocolate\\_vs\\_hot\\_cocoa](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/plant_science_at_your_dinner_table_hot_chocolate_vs_hot_cocoa)



**Winter blues:** Do you get the winter blues or could it be seasonal depression? Turns out the lack of light can make a huge difference to your health and well-being. Light affects the supply of melatonin in your body, which increases when the days are shorter. Melatonin helps induce sleep, so it's no wonder we feel like hibernating in the winter! Add to the levels of melatonin remain higher longer in the morning and it's tough to get the wake up call. Taking a morning walk might just help!

## New Year's Resolutions

Is eating healthier, losing weight or getting in shape your new years resolution? You are not alone and Rutgers Fact Sheet 1054, *Smart Food Choices: Veggies Foster Health*, can help you with that goal by providing daily recommendations of vegetables for family members. There is also a reader-friendly chart that provides the amount that counts as 1 cup of vegetables broken into the categories of dark green, orange, starchy and other vegetables, which takes away some of the confusion factors in preparing your healthy meals.

Gardening can also help. Gardening in general burns anywhere from 135 to 200 calories in 30 minutes. Add to that, gardening activities can help with endurance, resistance, flexibility and strength depending on the task. For instance, digging or spading the garden works the upper body, back and leg muscles improving muscle strength, endurance and resistance.

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/1993/11-10-1993/exer.html>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/diet-and-weight-loss/calories-burned-in-30-minutes-of-leisure-and-routine-activities>



Another popular resolution is to spend less money. Eating healthy can be costly, but you can save money by growing your vegetables. Not sure how or where to start? Rutgers Fact Sheet 129, *Planning a Vegetable Garden*, is a wonderful reference tool. Still need some help? Stop by or give us a call and we'll be glad to answer your questions.

<https://health.ucsd.edu/news/features/Pages/2016-12-19-listicle-new-years-resolutions.aspx>



## **Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County**



# **MASTER GARDENER 2020 COURSE CLASSES**

**RUTGERS**

New Jersey Agricultural  
Experiment Station

**EVERY  
TUESDAY**

**2/4/20  
-  
6/23/20**

**9 AM  
-  
12PM**

**291 Morton Ave., Millville, NJ 08332**

**\$20 Individual Class -- \$210 Whole Course**

**[2020MasterGardenerCourse.Eventbrite.com](https://2020MasterGardenerCourse.Eventbrite.com)**





**Rutgers Master Gardeners of  
Cumberland County  
is sponsoring...**



## Harrisburg PA Farm Show Bus Trip

**Date: January 10, 2020; The coach bus will leave the Ramada parking lot (rear) at 7AM and return by 7PM.**

**Cost: \$35 and includes bus transport and gratuities**

**Admittance to the show is free.**

**Make checks payable to Board of Ag. Research account and send them to B. McOscar, PO Box 22, Greenwich, NJ08323**



- Experience maple production and honey extraction
- Learn how to construct a rain barrel
- Build a container salad garden
- Attend a Learn All About Butterflies workshop
- Hourly celebrity chef demonstrations
- Best Beer and Sausage Competition
- ...too many to list!!!!



**For more information call:**

**Barbara at 856-455-5632 or Pat at 856-825-1281**

**Register by December 5, 2019**

### Upcoming What's Growing On... Mailed Subscription Renewal

If you wish to continue receiving "What's Growing On..." and other educational mailings from our office, now is the time to renew your subscription.

If you are not already receiving the newsletter via email, please consider doing so. The email comes with all the same information and in full color. If you are already receiving the newsletter via email, thank you for helping us go green.

Reactivation forms (for mailed newsletters only) are due back to our office no later than February 14th, 2020. We will begin using the updated mailing list for the March 2020 issue.

You can reactivate your subscription to "Cultivating Cumberland" in one of the following ways:

- Call Pam at 856-451-2800 x3
- Email: PamelaBu@co.cumberland.nj.us
- Fax this form back to 856-451-4206
- Return this form by mail to

ATTN: Pam Burton, Agriculture Department, 291 Morton Ave, Millville, NJ 08332

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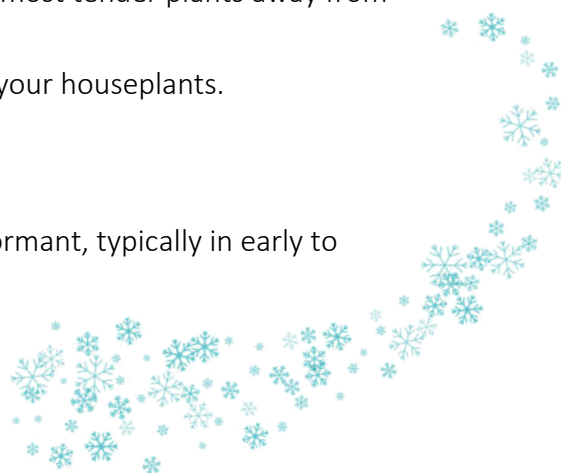
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## Garden Tips for December:

- ☐ Select a live or cut Christmas tree while the selection is good. Your live Christmas tree should be put in a cool location for no more than a week before planting.
- ☐ Keep the tree outdoors until it is time to decorate it.
- ☐ Keep poinsettias out of cold drafts and away from heat sources.
- ☐ Place poinsettias where they will get as much light as possible.
- ☐ Popcorn and cranberry garlands are easy to make and a festive decoration for your Christmas tree.
- ☐ Cover or move any stone statuary indoors to prevent frost cracks.
- ☐ Protect furniture from the sap of fresh, needled evergreen boughs when decorating for the holidays.
- ☐ Don't let dried evergreen decorations become a fire hazard.
- ☐ Trim an outdoor evergreen tree with treats for wildlife. FS 1022
- ☐ If you're considering the native American holly for your landscape, please be advised that it will grow to 40-50 feet in height with a spread of 18-40 feet. FS1151
- ☐ Begin planning your garden as the seed catalogs arrive in the mail. Check out the new offerings from mail order companies and try a few new plants next year. Make sure plants are hardy for this area before ordering and choose disease-resistant varieties. They make gardening easier and they reduce the expense of pesticides. FS1163
- ☐ Evaluate your landscape. Plan to fill in gaps with appropriate plants in the spring.
- ☐ Gather holiday greens from your landscape but prune carefully. Spray the greens with an antidesiccant to retard water loss.
- ☐ Limit traffic over dormant lawns. Grass is easily broken now and the crown of the plant may be severely damaged or killed.
- ☐ Begin bringing in some bulbs potted for forcing. Put them in a cool location with bright light. FS1220
- ☐ Plant your live Christmas tree as soon as possible after Christmas.
- ☐ Rotate houseplants to achieve even growth.
- ☐ Keep succulents and cacti on the dry side.
- ☐ Do not feed houseplants during the winter months and reduce the watering.
- ☐ Raise the humidity for your houseplants by grouping them together.
- ☐ Water houseplants with room temperature water. Move the most tender plants away from windows on cold nights.
- ☐ When dusting the furniture, consider washing the dust from your houseplants.
- ☐ Keep your Christmas tree stand filled with water.
- ☐ Plants make nice holiday gifts.
- ☐ Apply mulch to strawberries once the plants have become dormant, typically in early to mid-December. FS097
- ☐ Get caught up on your garden reading list.
- ☐ Have a nice December!





## Garden Tips for January:

- ☐ After the ground freezes, mulch shrubs and perennials with straw, pine needles, or branches of the discarded Christmas tree to prevent heaving of the plants during periods of freezing and thawing.
- ☐ Inspect stored bulbs and rhizomes and discard those that are rotting. FS1155
- ☐ Salt on sidewalks and driveways can injure nearby lawns and plants. Try sawdust or sand instead.
- ☐ Mealy bugs on house plants can be killed by touching them with cotton dipped in alcohol.
- ☐ Economical "sticky stakes" for trapping whiteflies and aphids can be made by cutting bright-yellow cardboard or plastic, such as recycled detergent bottles or margarine tubs, into strips. Coat with petroleum jelly. Insert into pots or hang near problem areas.
- ☐ Your local delicatessen or fast food restaurant often has surplus 5-gallon plastic pickle buckets. This is a good size for growing containerized plants and for general use in the garden.
- ☐ Some mail order seed companies offer pelletized seeds of lettuce, carrot, and a few other small-seeded crops. Pelletized seeds have a special coating to make them larger and easier to handle. FS1163
- ☐ One way to file seeds as they come in the mail is to use index card tabs to divide a cardboard file box into categories for each vegetable or flower. As new seeds arrive, place them alphabetically into the proper slot. Drop notes into the file to remind yourself what is on order to avoid duplication.
- ☐ How energy efficient is your landscape? Do you have evergreen trees or shrubs blocking a window where the sun's warmth would be welcome now? Consider replacing them with a deciduous plant that would let sun in during the winter but cast cooling shade in the summer.
- ☐ Wood ashes will raise soil pH. Use them only if the pH is less than 7.0 based on a soil test. The safe rate of wood ash application to lawn or gardens is 15 to 20 lbs. per 1000 square feet per year. Remember, a little wood ash is beneficial, but a lot is not.
- ☐ The flower for January is the carnation.
- ☐ Have a Happy and Healthy New Year!



## Garden Tips for February:

- ☐ Have your lawn mower and rototiller serviced. FS102
- ☐ Take stock of leftover seeds. Get them organized and do some germination testing if they're more than a few years old or if storage conditions have not been cool and dry. Even under ideal storage conditions, some vegetable seeds have a fairly short life and probably will not be good one or two years after purchase. These include sweet corn, onion, and parsnip.
- ☐ Purchase new cool-white fluorescent bulbs for your indoor grow lights.
- ☐ If the soil dries out against a house under the eaves where rain rarely reaches, water well during a thaw to prevent loss of plants. Remember that plants require water during the winter to replace water lost due to wind desiccation and lack of rain or snow.
- ☐ Make final plans for the annual and vegetable gardens and get the seeds ordered soon. A frequently overlooked factor in vegetable garden planning is the date of the family vacation. Choose planting dates and varieties carefully, so your garden won't be ready for a full harvest when you are out of town. FS1163
- ☐ Look for sales on fertilizer, seed starting supplies, tools and organic mulches.
- ☐ Get your hand tools organized and sharpened. Check the handles on shovels and hoes to make sure they're firmly attached. Paint the handles of garden tools red or orange. This will preserve the wood and make the tools easier to locate in the garden.
- ☐ Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, spirea, and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about three weeks. For something unique to force for winter flower arrangements, consider red maple, buckeye, birch, hickory, larch or oak branches.
- ☐ Repot your houseplants. Check them closely for insects.
- ☐ Plan a perennial border. Particularly good choices for a cutting garden are daisy, dahlia, aster, gladiolus and lily.
- ☐ Inspect perennial beds for heaved plants during warm periods. Mulch around heaved plants. Don't push them into the soil! Dig and replant them in the spring.
- ☐ Miniature roses can be a colorful addition to your landscape. They range from pure white to golden yellow to dark red. They grow well on containers and planters, or they can be used as a low-growing border or mixed in beds/borders with other perennials.
- ☐ Make labels for your spring garden. Plastic milk jugs or bleach bottles cut in strips 1" by 6 to 7" work well. Use permanent ink markers to write on them.
- ☐ Continue to feed the birds.
- ☐ Have you had a soil sample analyzed within the past few years? Soil sampling packets are available at your local Extension office. FS797
- ☐ Give a living plant as a present for Valentine's Day.
- ☐ The flower of the month is the violet.
- ☐ Get ready for spring! It will be here next month.



## Rutgers Cooperative Extensions Fact Sheets

**Call 856/451-2800 x4 ask for Pam Burton. When calling to request a fact sheet refer to the Fact Sheet by FS# or by name. All fact sheets are free unless otherwise noted.**

**Fact Sheets are also available on-line at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/>**

## Rutgers Cooperative Extensions Fact Sheets: Winter

<b>FS #</b>	<b>Fact Sheet Name</b>
Fact Sheet 002	Brown Marmorated stink bug-a non-native insect in NJ
Fact Sheet 019	How to Hire a Tree Care Professional
Fact Sheet 034	Build Bird nest Boxes
Fact Sheet 035	Build Brush Piles for Wildlife
Fact Sheet 074	Backyard Leaf Composting
Fact Sheet 097	Growing Strawberries in the Home Garden
Fact Sheet 099	Problems With Over-Mulching Trees and Shrubs
Fact Sheet 102	Your Lawn and Its Care
Fact Sheet 117	Using Leaf Compost
E271	Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance
Fact Sheet 387	How to Start a Windowsill Herb Garden
Fact Sheet 389	Minimizing Waste Disposal: grass Clippings
Fact Sheet 426	Moss in Lawns
Fact Sheet 553	Highbush Blueberry: The State Fruit of New Jersey
Fact Sheet 797	Soil Testing for Home Lawns and Gardens
Fact Sheet 805	Vermicomposting
Fact Sheet 811	Home Composting
Fact Sheet 849	Cover Crops and Green Manure
Fact Sheet 930	Natural Pest Control
Fact Sheet 944	Roses and Their Care
Fact Sheet 1011	Landscaping to Create Backyard Bird Habitat
Fact Sheet 1022	Backyard Birdfeeders
Fact Sheet 1118	Rain Barrels Part 2: Installation and Use
Fact Sheet 1144	Bagworm <i>Thyridopteryx Ephemeraeformis</i> (Haworth)
Fact Sheet 1150	African Violet Care
Fact Sheet 1151	Hollies for New Jersey
Fact Sheet 1153	Growing Dahlias
Fact Sheet 1154	Orchids on the Windowsill
Fact Sheet 1155	Cannas
Fact Sheet 1156	Keeping Geraniums Over Winter
Fact Sheet 1163	Mail Order Vegetable Seed Sources for the NJ Gardener
Fact Sheet 1214	Canada Goose Ecology and Impacts in New Jersey
Fact Sheet 1220	Spring Flowering Bulbs

**Call 856/451-2800 Ext. 4**

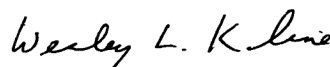
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refer to the Fact Sheet by FS# or by name.**

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*What's Growing On* is prepared by Pam Burton, Horticultural Assistant, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County.



Sincerely,



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For important announcements concerning the Cumberland County Extension Center visit:  
<http://Cumberland.njaes.rutgers.edu>

If you have any questions concerning the website, please call our office at  
856-451-2800 x1 for agriculture and  
856-451-2800 x4 for Home Horticulture and Master Gardeners

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