



Betty's Bloomers Nursery

Issue 13

DECEMBER 15, 2005

Merry Christmas!

We hope you are enjoying your Christmas holidays, lots of presents, good food, friends & family. After all the presents are opened and the Christmas guests are gone, what a better way to burn some of those extra pounds gained and enjoy some back to normal activities than to get outside and work. Actually there is no better time to plant many trees and shrubs than now. The old-timers always planted during the 12 days following Christmas. Planting during the dormant season gives trees and shrubs a chance to get established before the stress of the hot, dry Summer hits. And, they will need very little water or care until later.

What's in Season?

Fruit trees are available now in many garden centers. You can grow apples, pears, peaches, plums, berries & grapes successfully in our area. However, you must choose varieties that grow well here. You should find out what the "chilling requirements" are for the trees you are shopping for. Most deciduous fruit crops have a sort of biological clock/thermostat that measures dormant season exposure to cold. Fruit growers call that clock the plants "chilling requirement". Specifically, what the plant is measuring is the number of hours

between freezing and 45 degrees. Each fruit variety has its own specific needs. Each will have its own minimum number of hours that it must receive before it can break bud and bloom the following spring. If you plant a variety with a much higher chilling requirement, it may not form good flower bud if it does not receive enough cold weather. As a result, you may never get any fruit off it.

On the other hand, if you plant a type with a very low chilling requirement, it may have that requirement met by mid-winter. If it is then exposed to a few warm days, it may try to come into bloom prematurely, only to be caught by a late-winter freeze. You can usually be safe by choosing trees with a chilling requirement of between 400-600 hours for our area.

To Do List:

Now is the time to cut back & prune the dried foliage from dormant perennials and pull out dead summer annuals. Of course, haven't we had enough cleaning up for the last several months, but your flower beds will be all ready to be replanted when Spring finally gets here.

Use those raked leaves in your vegetable garden by tilling them in helping to loosen the soil and adding organic compost at the same time. Also, we all have ashes left over from burning debris piles,

sprinkle a layer into all your beds to add potash, a valuable nutrient to your soil.

Now is a good time to get out all those gardening magazines and books you never find time to read. Learning about new varieties and new products is always a good idea.

Something Extra

I found a wonderful book recently, "Old Time Gardening Wisdom" by Jerry Baker. It's about gardening tips he learned from his Grandmother when he was growing up. We all would be better gardeners if we listened to how our grandparents used to do it. I can credit most of what I know from my Mom, the original "Betty" from Betty's Bloomers. They never threw anything away, and everything went in the compost pile. The home-remedy insecticides and fungicides worked as well as strong chemicals we have today & are much better at protecting our environment too.

For those of us who are already Grandparents, what could be a more wonderful gift we can give our grandkids than our love of nature and gardening.

Contact us

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REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!