

## DECEMBER GARDENING TIPS

### Feed Blooming Plants

Feed your blooming flowers such as dianthus, alyssum and pansies because they need the nutrition to keep on going strong.

### Dead Head Blooming Plants

Dead head winter blooming plants by pinching off spent blooms so that the blooms will keep on coming all winter long.

### Prepare Gasoline Powered Engines for Winter

Gasoline powered engines such as lawn mowers and weed eaters need prepared for winter so you do not damage the engine. Run the engines void of gasoline and change the oil before winter. When spring comes and you need to mow your lawn you will have an added advantage of being all ready!

### Water Before Freeze

Water well before a freeze as it insulates the plants. Be careful not to overwater as you will get root rot. It takes a lot longer for the soil to dry out in the winter.

### Clean And Sharpen Garden Tools

Start by washing the dirt off of your tools and allowing them to dry overnight. Then sand the rust off of the metal and the splinters off of the wood. Sharpen the tools. Follow with a coat of oil. Hang up the tools to keep them looking like new. Another great way to store your tools is in a bucket of sand.

### Organic Fruit Tree Regime

This is an organic fruit tree regime for apple, pear, peach, and plum trees.

**Step One** of the Organic Fruit Tree Spray Schedule is to spray fruit trees with copper at leaf fall, if this hasn't happened already at your house. "Leaf fall" is when the largest amount of leaves fall from the tree. With this comes many entry points for disease and insects to enter. Copper is an organic fungicide which will help prevent this. Be careful when handling copper; follow package directions and wear protection.

Never use copper when temperatures are expected to rise above 80 - 85 degrees, or it may burn the foliage. Ten days or more after spraying the copper apply **Step Two**: spray dormant oil on the fruit trees. Dormant oil is used to smother insect pests. If you had disease or pest problems in the previous season, rake up and dispose of the fallen leaves and twigs. Make sure fruit trees are well-mulched, and water deeply if we go one month without an inch of rain over the winter. **Step Three** will be at "Bud Swell" in the spring: spray copper again. **Step Four** will be at "Petal Fall" in the spring: Spray an insecticide to combat the Plum Curculio.

### Christmas Trees

Save a tree from destruction and buy a live tree this year. If you do not have room to plant it in your yard donate it to your school, park or another local club. Edible San Marcos has a school that would love to plant trees so you can email us and we will find a home for the trees. Thank you for being kind to the planet in advance.