

THE EL DORADO NURSERY AND GARDEN NEWSLETTER

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Nov/December 2020



GARDEN CALENDAR



What to do in November

- Knock down basins around trees so rain will drain off.
- Plant spring blooming bulbs. Be sure to use EB Stone bulb food or bone meal and amend the soil.
- Transplant trees, shrubs and perennials. Amend the soil before planting and add EB Stone starter fertilizer or bone meal.
- Start indoor amaryllis (mid-month begin forcing bulbs to give as holiday gifts).
- Rake leaves and recycle to your compost pile.
- Set out Garlic and Onion sets. Use EB Stone Starter fertilizer or Bone Meal.
- Flush drip-irrigation systems with water to clear sediment, then drain the lines to avoid winter freezing and breakage. Drain garden hoses and disconnect from faucet.
- After leaf drop, apply first dormant spray (Monterey Hort. oil or Monterey Liqui-cop).
- Nov. 25: Closed Thanksgiving Day. Happy Holiday!

What to do in December

- Need gift ideas? We sell gift certificates.
- Apply second dormant spray on fruit trees.
- Hoe and pull winter weeds. Apply pre-emergents such as Preen or Weed Impede to prevent weeds.
- Remove foil from gift plants to prevent root rot.
- Move live Christmas trees indoors to decorate. Do not leave inside for more than 10 days.
- Rake up leaves to prevent spread of disease and over-wintering insects.
- Protect citrus from winter frost
- To save tender plants from sudden freeze, turn on sprinklers or mist them lightly before they thaw (cold water adds heat). Other methods include Cloud Cover spray, covering the plants with burlap, boxes, or row cover. Uncover during the day (row cover or Frost blanket can stay on). Try wrapping a small string of Christmas tree lights on the plant (the warm kind).
- Apply Green All Chelated iron to yellowing Gardenias, Azaleas, other acid loving plants, and Citrus.
- Closed Christmas Day. Merry Christmas!



December Special

First 100 customers

Starting December 1, be one of the first 100 customers to Spend \$25.00 or more to get a free super-bright flashlight!!!!



Around the Nursery:



New arrivals



Coffee berry – nice specimen or hedge, will tolerate shade and snow. 6-8' tall and wide.

We will continue to follow Social Distancing Guidelines for as long as it is needed. Masks required at the cash register and when showing a staff member pictures on your phone. Thank you.

Winter Pond Care

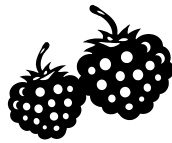
Fall is finally here. Fall the leaves do, right into your pond. If you have a skimmer, then you are already taken care of. If you don't, then not to worry. A simple frame of 2x4's or PVC pipe covered by bird netting or chicken wire works very well to keep most of the leaves out of the pond. Why do you want to keep the leaves out? As the leaves decompose they use up oxygen and give off poison gases. For the fish in the pond, this is not good news. As the amount of oxygen goes down and the level of poison goes up, the fish are going to suffocate. While a few leaves are not going to cause a big problem, a lot just might.

- Prune yellowing leaves off all of your plants. Your lilies – tropical and hardy – should still be going strong, at least until the first heavy frost.
- Stop fertilizing plants when the weather becomes cooler. This lets the plants know the season is coming to an end.
- When the water temperature is around 50 degrees F, stop feeding your fish. If you continue to feed them, you might create health problems for your finned friends, since their digestive systems are beginning to slow down for the winter.
- As leaves fall from nearby trees, you'll need to empty your skimmer's debris net every day to keep up with the influx of leaves. Some leaves will undoubtedly sink to the bottom of the pond; try to remove as many as you can. However, a few left in the pond will give insects and frogs a place to over-winter.
- If you leave too much organic matter in your pond, the water may turn brown. If this happens, remove the excess debris and add activated carbon to clear the water.
- As the temperature gets colder and your plants expire, cut back the dead plant material and remove the tropicals. Cut back the cattails above the water level, or better yet, leave them up to see how magnificent they look in the winter.

Those of you in the higher elevations may worry about your pond freezing up. For the most part, it really isn't cold enough to freeze a pond solid here. If you wake up and your pond has a layer of ice over the top, this is not a problem. If the ice is too thick to break up easily on its own, then you have to help it. **Never** hit ice on the top of your pond. You could cause serious harm and stress to your fish. Fish may die from too much stress. To break up the ice, place a pan of hot, not boiling, water on the ice near the center. Tie a rope to the handle of the pan to pull it up in case it falls. Once you have at least an air hole, your fish should be just fine.

- If you have fish, a small re-circulating pump or pond aerator that bubbles at the water surface is necessary to oxygenate the water. In all but extremely low temperatures, the bubbling of the pump will also keep a hole open in the ice to allow for a gas exchange, keeping your fish alive. It is not necessary to oxygenate the water or keep a hole open in the ice if you don't have fish.
- If your area experiences long periods of extremely cold weather, you may consider adding a floating pond heater and de-icer. Controlled by a thermostat, the unit only runs when the water temperature is at or below freezing, heats the water to just above that, and then shuts off again. Ask your installer or local supplier for products to help your pond during the winter.
- If you use a floating de-icer, place it away from the bubbler. The movement of the water from the bubbler can move the heated water away from the de-icer, making it run more than necessary.

- You can also choose to keep the waterfall running. This will require a little babysitting to make sure an ice dam does not form, which could cause water to run out of the waterfall's basin. You will also still need to replace water loss so the pump can continue to function properly. This extra effort during the winter will reward you with the most beautiful ice formations and patterns around the falls and stream beds.



Berries in El Dorado County

People these days are more health conscious than ever. They're exercising regularly and eating healthier. Berries are a healthy food source. They are full of antioxidants, fun to snack on, and are easier to grow than people think. With so many varieties of raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, and blueberries it's hard to know their differences and which ones will do well for you.

As you probably already know, blackberries grow wild throughout the county.

These cane berries are not finicky plants and getting a large tasty crop isn't difficult. Blackberries and raspberries aren't susceptible to disease as long as they aren't severely and repeatedly stressed. To achieve this, start right. As with all berries, you need to improve your soil's texture and fertility with a soil conditioner such as compost. I

berry planting sites. Fishbone meal is high in naturally lacks) and breaks down in the soil faster After planting, keep up on routine fertilizing to ensure fertilizing schedule.

Keep your soil moist at all times - not soaking wet easiest ways to water in most cases. Keep in mind you'll summer when they are actively growing and decrease watering as it cools down.

Don't let your cane berries get out of control. Keep them in check by pruning the fruit bearing canes all the way to the ground after harvest. Having a support to grow on will make harvesting easier for you. A trellis or wire system is easy to use. Tie the young shoots to direct their growth.

Raspberries cannot handle our hot summer sun. They do best with morning sun and afternoon shade. Blackberries will tolerate the all day sun; just remember to keep the soil moist at all times. Cane berries are long lived and will yield fruit for 20+ years.

Here are some varieties to consider:

Black Satin is a disease resistant *thornless* blackberry. It is a heavy-yielding plant with medium to large honey-sweet berries.

Marion blackberry fruit is bright red, firm, very flavorful. Produced on vigorous, trailing canes. Suitable for home freezing and canning.

Boysenberries(thornless) are a tart version of blackberries.

Baba Red is an everbearing raspberry. Large red berries, more heat tolerant than other raspberries.

Fall Gold is a yellow raspberry with very sweet flavor. Berries are large, juicy, and firm. Plants are vigorous and very cold hardy.



Strawberries are wonderful for eating fresh and making jam. Plants will take full sun, but they appreciate some light afternoon shade. Strawberries need well-draining, fertile soil, so again, **AMEND YOUR SOIL!** Set your plants about 18" apart. Be sure not to bury the crown too deep, just deep enough to adequately cover the roots. Do not use steer manure as it is too high in nitrate salts. Don't plant them in an area where potatoes have been grown before, due to verticillium wilt.

Unlike cane berries, strawberry plants should be replaced about once every three years when productivity has greatly decreased. Strawberries are more susceptible to diseases than other berries, but taking precautions can greatly reduce the risk. Mulch once a year with an inch of straw or bark to prevent soil borne diseases from splashing on the leaves. Always water in the morning so the moisture has time to evaporate throughout the day. Watering in the evening can promote fungal problems. If a problem with insects occurs, use an insecticide labeled for organic use such as Spinosad, or Bug Buster-O. Be sure to follow label instructions. There may be a waiting period until harvest.

Don't let your plants send out too many runners as this deprives energy from berry production. Protect your fruit from the birds. Bird netting is a foolproof way to make sure you get the fruit before they do. Mylar 'Scare Tape' works well, however the birds may get used to it and learn to work around it if you don't change its position every couple of weeks.

Ever-bearing strawberry varieties are good for making shortcake or eating fresh. You harvest a fair amount of berries over the season. June bearing varieties are good for freezing or making jam. You get an abundance of berries over one or two months. Twenty-five plants should yield enough for a family of four.

Blueberries

Blueberries are probably the most nutritious and ornamental plant you can grow in El Dorado County. Most cultivars provide beautiful fall color in shades of red and orange. Blueberries are high in antioxidants and very versatile. They are wonderful which are fairly simple but



These berries are great in cakes, pies, and eating fresh in cereal in smoothies. Blueberries, however, do demand certain needs absolutely essential.

Blueberries require acidic soil. The pH must range from 4.5-5.5. To achieve this, amend your soil with lots of peat moss as well as compost and use cotton seed meal as your starter fertilizer. Always fertilize with an acid food or something labeled specifically for blueberries. Use a pH tester to make sure you're soil is in the correct range. Blueberries do not like fertilizer high in nitrogen so look for a fertilizer such as 2-10-10 or 7-14-7. As long as the first number is lower than the second, they will be just fine.

Water to keep the soil moist especially during berry production. If allowed to dry out, the fruit may crack or drop. Use mulch such as straw to help prevent evaporation loss. For high quality fruit, plant in an area that will be given some afternoon shade. Protect your berries from the birds. They can decimate a whole bush of unripe fruit overnight.



Jubilee and **O'Neal** are varieties with low chilling requirement hours. They are great for all areas, especially warmer areas such as Cameron Park and El Dorado Hills.

Southmoon tolerates faster draining soil. It is good for all areas, and if you have sandy-loam soil like most gardeners in the Somerset area, this cultivar is your best choice.

Bluecrop and **Blueray** are the most popular varieties and with good reason. They both have large, firm fruit and are vigorous growers.

All blueberries are self-fruitful but you'll get a heavier crop if you plant more than one variety. Come check out our ripening chart to see which ones are early, mid-season, and late. It's better to have multiple harvests over the season rather than buckets of blueberries at once. A family of four should have two to three plants.

Blueberries start fruiting on two to three year old wood, but you'll usually get a small crop the first year. If you were to remove the flowers the first season, the plant will put its energy towards a healthy root system instead of fruit production. Farmers and professionals use this technique and swear by it. It isn't necessary but is a good idea.

The price of berries in the produce department at the grocery store may be inspiration to grow your own. Get the whole family involved and eating the fruit will be rewarding in more ways than one. A little time and effort and you'll be living sweet and nutritious. Happy berry picking!

