




## Garden Planning for the New Year

It's a new year and time to start thinking and planning for the gardening year ahead. Get out a pencil and notepad and walk around your landscape. We all need the exercise anyway after all of that holiday feasting! Make notes of what worked and what didn't work in your garden last year. Make sketches of the areas you want to change or expand.

Using these notes, start your wish list of plant material. You should have no problem choosing plants. I don't know a gardener alive who isn't inundated with seed and plant catalogs this time of year. All of them are loaded with pages of colorful, eye-popping specimens. The problem is to maintain some sense of control while looking through hundreds of pages of perfect plants. Although it will be a struggle, one which I admit I have lost occasionally, please don't mindlessly order everything that strikes your fancy.

Consider the following questions before mail ordering any plant material:

1. Will it grow well in my climatic zone? (I don't mean just barely survive, but thrive and live to bloom and multiply!)
2. Do I have a suitable place for this plant?
3. Is ordering by mail the most cost effective way to obtain this plant? Always check your local garden center or nursery first before mail ordering.
4. Do I honestly need this, or have I let my imagination run wild!

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## Preventing Insects on Your Houseplants

Improper care is often the result of houseplants looking unhealthy. Too much or too little water, placing them in the wrong light or near heat, or too much or too little fertilizer can cause many plant problems. However, in some cases, the problem results from a pest infestation. Several pests feed on houseplants. These pests most often come into the home on newly purchased plants or on those that have been outside for the summer.

The best way to control insects and related pests on houseplants is through prevention. Preventing insect related issues is often easier than eliminating one. Here are some tips which will decrease the chances of dealing with an insect pest infestation of most houseplants.

Provide a plant with the growing conditions that it needs, so that it is more likely to grow vigorously. Do some research to help determine the needs of your houseplant, if needed. Stressed plants tend to be more susceptible to all types of pest problems.

Inspect, inspect, inspect! Before you purchase a plant or bring one indoors, always check it and its container for signs of pests. If you inspect the plant before purchasing, choose another, if necessary. A plant that has been outside for the summer, especially one sitting on the ground, may have pests that have crawled in through the drainage holes. First, take the plant out of the pot to examine the soil. Most pests are found on the exterior of the root ball. It's easier to control insect pests outdoors. Sometimes you can simply wash or brush them off.

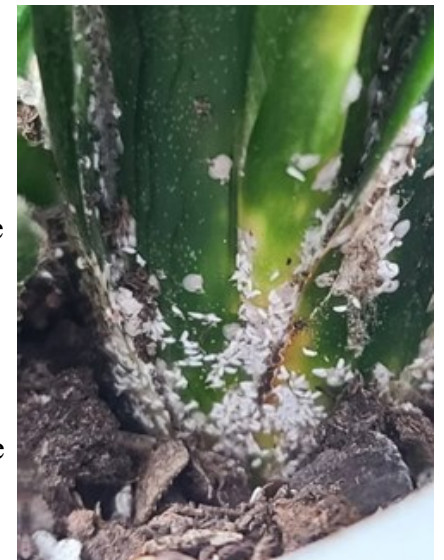
Isolate new plants from plants already in the home for six weeks to ensure that any pest brought in will be less likely to spread. While plants are isolated, carefully examine them for signs of pests or damage on a regular basis of about once a week. Pay particular attention to the undersides of leaves, where pests are most often found. Using a 10X magnifying lens will make it easier to see small pests and immature pest stages. Infestations are often much easier to control if caught early.

Washing smooth-leaved plants every two to three weeks discourages pest infestations and improves the appearance of the foliage. Small plants can be inverted, and the foliage swished in a bucket of lukewarm water. To prevent loss of soil, cover it with aluminum foil or plastic wrap. Large plants can be hosed down gently, or upper and lower surfaces of leaves can be wiped with a soft, wet cloth. Large plants can also be rinsed in a tepid shower. When repotting a plant, use commercially prepared potting soil rather than soil from outdoors, which can be a source of pests.

If an insect pest is found, the first step in control is to isolate the plant suspected of being infested until the pest is completely controlled. This process may take several weeks or more. You may also choose to remove and destroy infested parts. Spraying the plant with insecticidal soap can often eliminate a pest infestation in its early stages. Insecticidal soaps are contact insecticides and are only effective when they make direct contact with insects and has no effect once it dries. Insecticidal soaps are most effective against soft-bodied insects and related pests, such as aphids, mealybugs, immature scales (crawlers), thrips, whiteflies, and spider mites. Since pests may be hidden or in the egg stage, eliminating them often takes more than one treatment. If chemical control is warranted, proper identification is needed to ensure you choose the right product. Read the label directions of all pesticides! If the plant is severely damaged and not valuable, the best and simplest solution may be to discard the plant and its soil and start with a new plant.



Spider mites on Ficus



Mealy bugs congregated at the base of a Snake Plant

# Garden Calendar: January

Now is the time of year that Cabin Fever and garden catalogs in our mailboxes get us dreaming about getting out into the garden.



## Planning

- Start plans on paper for changes or improvements in the garden.
- Order seed for early planting.

## Equipment

- Repair and sharpen mowers and tools. Order new pots and markers.
- Check condition of sprayers.

## Planting

- Set out trees and shrubs.
- Plant Sweet Peas, Poppies, and Larkspur.



## Fertilizing

- January - March is the proper time to fertilize trees and shrubs.
- Apply lime to lawns if needed.

## Pest Control

- Scale on broad-leaf evergreens should be sprayed with dormant oil for control.

## Pruning

- Trim Nandinas.

## Mulch

- Mulch Lilies with compost.
- Protect tender plants during periods of extreme cold.

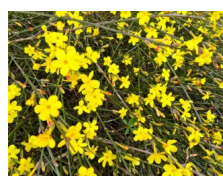
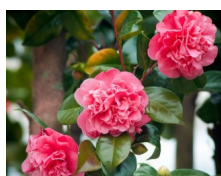


## Miscellaneous

- Keep bird feeders stocked. Provide water for birds.
- After freeze, check to make sure plants have not heaved out of the ground.

## In Bloom

- Camellia, Winter Honeysuckle, Winter Jasmine, and in mild winters Flowering Quince





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## Spring Weed Control in Home Lawns

With what many folks would describe as a mild winter so far, our winter (Cool Season) lawn weeds are beginning to thrive. While it is normally March-May when burweed/ stickerweed (*Soliva pterosperma*) is noticeable growing in lawns and on turf that we receive calls to the Extension Office on how to eradicate this prickly pest, the best time for control and sticker prevention is now, because the plant is just beginning to sprout from seed and grow.

Burweed/ stickerweed is best described as a low-growing, freely branched winter annual. The real identifier is that once the plant reaches a reproductive stage the small fruit clusters (small rosette buttons) begin to form down in the leaf axils. At the tip of each seed within the cluster is a tiny spine that at maturity will stick into bare feet, knees, hands, or whatever parts of the body or clothing that may come in contact with the bur. This weed is actively growing now and the stickers will terrify bare feet well into the summer. While growth is just becoming noticeable, this plant is actually a winter annual that germinates late fall and remains very small and hard to see through the winter. As spring warm-up begins, rapid growth occurs along with flowering and a small spur or “sticker” forms.

The easiest method to control this weed and other noxious weeds, is all in timing and spraying with a proper herbicide **prior** to flowering. This is **before the spur is formed**. If the application of herbicide is too late, you will kill the plant, but the “sticker” will still be there.

In most situations, an application of atrazine or 2,4-D base products will control this weed, with optimal timing being mid-December thru mid-March, preferably when the temperature is above 60 degrees F, but **ALWAYS read labels before applying any pesticide to ensure proper applications**. The earlier in the season you begin to apply herbicide to burweed the easier it is to control, but plan to make at least two applications around 10 days apart for optimal control.

For more information on how to control this lawn weed or other spring lawn and pasture weeds, please contact your local County Extension Office.





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## Managing Deer in Residential Landscapes

The White-tailed Deer is the most popular game species in Mississippi. Nationally, the white-tailed deer population likely exceeds 30 million. In Mississippi, the deer herd is estimated at 1.75 million animals, which is higher on a deer-per-unit-area basis (density) than any other state, and only Texas has a greater number of deer.

Due to increasing human populations and new land development, conflicts between deer and people are inevitable. Residential construction in previously undeveloped areas forces deer and other animals into smaller and smaller pockets of suitable wildlife habitat. Often, these areas supported a large number of deer. Hunting is generally not an option for controlling deer populations within residential areas and deer become less and less afraid of people, dogs, lights, and automobiles. The challenge is for residents to learn how to live with deer in their neighborhoods.

What attracts deer into a residential area? With new homes come the planting of ornamentals that become expensive browse for deer that have been displaced. Many of the most popular landscaping plants are highly palatable for deer because of their high nutritional value, accessibility, and the tender new growth they provide. Azaleas and flowers are among the plants most susceptible to deer browse damage. The reality is if you plant ornamental shrubs and flowers that are attractive to deer there is a strong possibility that they will incur damage.

There are some repellants and exclusion devices that may help residents to reduce damage to their ornamental plants. Repellants may not work if the deer are hungry enough. Most are short-lived and wash off with rain or wear off in a short period of time so repeat applications are necessary. There are many types of deer fences and barriers that can be effective in certain situations. Permanent or temporary electric fences work best but most residential property owners prefer not to erect large fences to protect their yards. Some HOAs may have rules against using fences.

Deer like nutrition-rich plants, especially in spring and summer when does are pregnant or nursing, when young deer are growing and when bucks are growing antlers. Fertilized plants, such as those in home landscapes, provide protein, energy-rich carbohydrates, minerals, and salts. Deer also get about one-third of their water from the moisture in irrigated plants and young, succulent vegetation. There is no such thing as a deer-resistant plant, and when deer populations are high and food becomes scarce, deer may feed on plants that are thought to be deer-resistant. However, deer generally do not like plants with pungent aromas. There are many ornamental trees, shrubs, ground covers, vines, grasses, herbaceous bedding plants, etc. that deer rarely browse on that can be great additions to your landscape. A quick search on the internet will provide you with a long list of these resistant type plants.

Managing deer in residential areas can be difficult, especially from a people perspective. There is usually one faction that wants to get rid of the deer, and another faction that wants to protect the deer. There is rarely ever a way to satisfy everyone. Using repellants and fencing can be effective, but expensive tools for preventing deer browsing, but choosing the right plants for your landscape can relieve some of the stress caused by deer browsing.





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## Composting

What better way to start the New Year than recycling our natural resources? By composting yard and kitchen wastes, you can create your own mulch and fertilizer. Compost is a free source of “slow release” nutrients. It also loosens compacted soils and helps sandy soils hold nutrients.

Fallen leaves and shrub clippings are a good start to your compost project. Other compostable organic materials you can use are grass clippings, pine straw, and vegetable/fruit peelings, paper, and coffee grounds.

When constructing your compost pile, alternate using brown (leaves, straw) and green materials (grass clippings, vegetables) in your compost bin. Table scraps containing meat or oils are not recommended. Eggshells are okay.

Rainfall will provide most of the needed moisture, although you may need to add water to the pile during extended dry periods. For the best results, keep the pile moist but not soggy. If you pick up a handful, it should not drip water when squeezed.

Turn the pile on a regular basis to move oxygen through the pile to increase decomposition. You can buy compost bins with moving cylinders that can be turned with a handle. The process of decomposition will generate extreme heat (over 150°F in the summer) within the pile, which can kill weed seeds and disease-causing organisms.

Done correctly, composting is very easy to do and is a great way to do something good for your community, your yard, and your wallet! For more information on composting, contact your local Extension office.



## Beekeeping for Beginners and Experts



If you are a beekeeper or are interested in beekeeping, the Pearl River County Beekeeping Association would like you to attend their meeting on Saturday, January 7, 2023.

**Location: The Crosby Arboretum Program Room**  
**370 Ridge Road Picayune, MS 39466**  
**Saturday, January 7, 2023**



**Time: 10:00 a.m.**



# Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule



## Beekeeping for Beginners & Experts!

*Saturday, January 7, 10:00 a.m.*

Are you a beekeeper or interested in beekeeping? If so, the Pearl River County Beekeeping Association would welcome your attendance at their meeting, to be held in the Arboretum program room. Free admission.

## Family Workshop: Pinecone Bird Feeders

*Saturday, January 14, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.*

Birds and other wildlife often need extra food in the winter for fuel and warmth. Children will have fun making treats such as pinecone feeders filled with "bird butter" to attract birds and other wildlife to your backyard. All materials will be provided. Reservations required. As children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, there is no age limit. Members, \$4 per person; non-members, \$6 per person.

## Native Plants: Winter Field Walk

*Saturday, January 14, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.*

Walk the grounds with Arboretum director **Pat Drackett** and experience the subtle natural beauty of the winter landscape. Learn about native plants with winter interest and how you can incorporate them into your home landscape. Members free; non-members \$5. Reservations requested.

## Public Garden Tour & English Breakfast Tea (A Cozy Indoor Event!)

*Saturday, January 21, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.*

Join Pearl River County Master Gardener **Mary Donahue** and other enthusiastic Master Gardeners who will present slides and stories of selected visits to favorite public gardens (and castles!) in the U.S. and abroad. Enjoy an English Breakfast tea with scones, traditional tea sandwiches, and other delights. If you have slides you wish to share, please contact Pat at the Arboretum. Event is free and open to all.

## Jewelry Workshop: Make a Pendant!

*Saturday, January 21, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.*

Create a beautiful handmade pendant, with a semi-precious finished polished stone and Sterling Silver wire with jewelry maker **Connie Boyd of Unique Stones**, Cost of \$70 includes chain, tools for use, silver wire, stone and lesson, paid directly to the instructor day of the workshop (cash/check). More precious stones available. Reservations required.



## FORGE DAY

Blacksmithing &  
Metalworking  
Demonstrations

**SAT. JANUARY 28**

10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Join us for an exciting day of demonstrations by area metalworkers and craftsmen and learn how you can get started in metalworking. If you are invited to try your hand at the forge, a signed waiver will be required. Wares available for purchase. Please call to register. Members and non-members, entry is \$5 for adults, \$2 for children.

## PINE NEEDLE BASKETRY WORKSHOP:



*Saturday, February 4, 10:00 a.m. to Noon*

Learn how to get started in crafting pine needle baskets with basket maker **Denine Jones**. Participants will be introduced to basic pine needle basketry techniques and will begin a basket in the workshop. Methods and resources will be provided so you may continue working on your own. All materials provided. Scissors will be available, but you may bring your own. Class suited to ages 14 and up. Reservations required. Size is limited to 10 persons per session. Members \$15; non-members \$20.

# Events

## Soil Testing

There will be a new fee schedule starting Jan 1, 2023. **Cost for a standard soil test will go from \$8 to \$10.** Clients can opt for % organic matter (via LOI) for an additional \$2. Researchers can still have total C/N measured via combustion (but it will cost more). Our website has the current Fee schedule:

<http://extension.msstate.edu/content/fee-schedule>.

Additionally, we are moving away from paper submission forms. Once the current batch of submission forms runs out, the only option to submit a soil sample (even when paying via physical check/money order) will be online. The good news is the soil testing website also contains detailed instructions on how to accomplish that: <http://extension.msstate.edu/content/submitting-soil-test-the-lab>.

To register a soil sample online will require an Extension account. For county offices that wish to accommodate clients who are resistant to creating their own user name/password, the option exists to create an Extension account for your county office. There are many ways to set this up – contact me if you have questions. For offices that have a large cache of the soon-to-be-outdated paper submission forms, please make note of the fee changes on the form come Jan 1 (or recycle them).

The website now also contains detailed instructions on how to interpret our soil tests - including instructions on using a fertilizer calculator. <http://extension.msstate.edu/content/interpreting-your-soil-test>

There are new publications that explain how to calculate fertilizer rates “manually”:  
<https://extension.msstate.edu/publications/interpreting-your-soil-test-report-%E2%80%94-for-homeowners>  
<http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/interpreting-your-soil-test-report-%E2%80%94-for-farmers>



## Online Private Applicator Certification Program

**A private applicator is a certified applicator who uses or supervises the use of restricted-use pesticides to produce an agricultural commodity on his or her own land, leased land, or rented land or on the lands of his or her employer. Private applicators must be at least 18 years old.**

In response to limited face-to-face training during the COVID-19 situation, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Plant Industry has approved an online private applicator certification program developed by the MSU Extension Service. Persons needing to obtain or renew their private applicator certification can complete the online training (two video training modules and a competency exam) by using the following link: <http://extension.msstate.edu/content/online-private-applicator-certification-program>. The fee for training and testing is \$20, payable online by credit card, debit card, or eCheck.

A graphic for the Private Applicator Training and Testing Online program. It has a dark red header with the Mississippi State University Extension logo and name. Below the header, the words "Private Applicator" are written in large, white, sans-serif font, with "TRAINING AND TESTING ONLINE" in smaller, yellow, sans-serif font below it. The background is split into a blue upper section and a green lower section. In the green section, the text "Watch the training modules, pass the exam, and receive your private applicator certification from MDAC Bureau of Plant Industry." is written in white. To the right of this text, the word "COST" is written in yellow, and a large "\$20" is written in blue. At the bottom, there is a dark red footer with the text "Visit <http://msuext.ms/agmes> or contact your local MSU Extension office for info on how to register."