

# Calendar of Home Gardening Chores in Mississippi



Growing plants in the landscape or garden can be a fun task for Mississippi gardeners. Sometimes it can be difficult to remember when to do what. There are gardening chores that need to be done every month of each year. This publication will help guide you through the year toward a prettier and healthier landscape or garden.

## January

### *Planning*

- Record any plans on paper for changes or improvements in the garden. This will help you avoid mistakes and save time, effort, and money.
- Order seeds early for planting because companies may run out of the more popular varieties.

### *Planting*

- Set out dormant trees and shrubs. Container, bare-root, and balled-and-burlapped (B&B) plants are all available this time of year. Your planting site should be well-drained. Place plants at or slightly above the existing soil level.
- Plant onions, poppies, and larkspur.

### *Fertilizing*

- Apply lime to lawns if a soil test analysis recommends (any month).

### *Pest Control*

- Spray dormant oil for scale control on broad-leaved evergreens and fruit trees.

### *Pruning*

- Remove dead, diseased, or broken limbs on all trees.
- Lightly trim shrubs if they are creating a hazard.
- Dispose of clippings to prevent spread of disease or insect issues.

### *Miscellaneous*

- Keep bird feeders stocked. Provide water for birds.
- Collect scion wood for grafting and store in a cool, dry place.
- Protect tender plants during periods of extreme cold.

### *Home Accent*

- Collect winter berries and tree needles for a winter potpourri. Mahonia and aucuba will root in water indoors and provide color from the outdoors.
- A small amount of sugar in the water will help prevent cut holly branches from losing berries. Wash and dust leaves of house plants.
- Inspect house plants for insects and diseases. Treat as needed with a safe indoor insecticide and fungicide.

### *Equipment*

- Repair and sharpen mower blades and gardening tools.
- Order new pots and markers.
- Check condition of sprayers and repair or replace if needed.

### *Blooming*

- Camellias, winter honeysuckle, winter jasmine, flowering quince (South Mississippi).
- Pansies, violas.

### *Fruiting*

- Dogwoods, yaupon hollies, Chinese hollies, cotoneasters, pyracanthas, nandinas.



## February

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### *Planning*

- Decide on plants you would like to have in your spring garden and flower beds.
- Consider buying new plants that you have not tried before.
- Determine how many seed packets you need; remember to order extra seed if you are planning to replant for a second crop of flowers after the heat of the summer.

### *Planting*

- Start cold-weather vegetables in a cold frame: broccoli, cauliflower, onion sets, English peas, kale, carrots, collards, beets, radishes, kohlrabi, Chinese cabbage, (and eggplant in South Mississippi).
- Plant asparagus in prepared beds.
- Start herb seeds indoors to transplant outdoors in early April.
- Plant ornamental trees and fruit trees.
- Plant new roses or move old roses soon after February 15.

### *Fertilizing*

- Fertilize trees and shrubs (not spring-flowering shrubs) toward the end of the month (in South Mississippi). Follow soil sample recommendations or use a slow-release, complete fertilizer.
- For roses, apply a top-dressing of fertilizer under a thick layer of compost or mulch.

### *Pest Control*

- Spray the orchard with dormant oil spray. This helps control insect eggs and disease spores. Do not apply if temperatures are expected to dip below freezing within 4 hours of application. Always read the pesticide label.

## March

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### *Planting*

- Set out most shrubs and trees.
- Cold-weather annuals: sweet William, English daisies, pansies, and calendulas.
- Divide mondo grass, liriopse, cannas, chrysanthemums, coreopsis, and phlox.
- Start seeds for tomatoes, bell peppers, hot peppers, and eggplant.
- Set out herbs such as thyme, lemon balm, oregano, chives, sage, and winter savory.

### *Pruning*

- Prune evergreens for size and shape. Cut out any dead wood of flowering shrubs.
- Prune hydrangeas that bloom on the current season's growth during the last week in the month.
- Do not prune spring-flowering shrubs until after the bloom period is complete.

### *Home Accent*

- Winter-blooming shrubs can be forced to bloom indoors by cutting stems when buds begin to swell and placing them in water. The warmer indoor temperatures stimulate blooming. Place sprays of forsythia, flowering quince, oriental magnolia, or fruit trees in a vase in a sunny window.

### *Equipment*

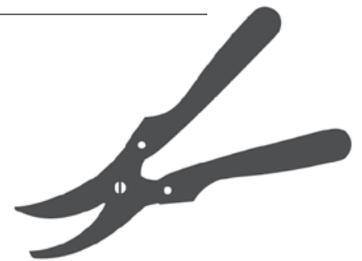
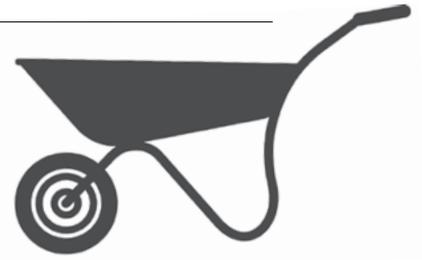
- Check tools for rust and clean if needed. Prevent future rust by lightly coating tool heads with mineral oil or used motor oil.

### *Blooming*

- Flowering quince, saucer/star magnolia, forsythia, bridal wreath spiraea, (azalea and royal paulownia in South Mississippi).
- Crocus, early daffodils, helleborus, hyacinths, pansies, snowdrops, snowflakes, violets.

### *Fruiting*

- Dogwoods, pyracanthas, yaupon hollies, Chinese hollies, cotoneasters, nandinas.



### **Fertilizing**

- Fertilize all ornamental shrubs and trees according to soil test results, or use a slow-release fertilizer.
- Top-dress azaleas and camellias with acid-loving fertilizer.
- Apply lime to peonies, clematis, and boxwoods.

### **Pest Control**

- Spray new rose leaves for black spot disease weekly once leaves are fully emerged.
- A soil-drench rose disease control product can be used after leaves are fully developed.

### **Pruning**

- Prune roses. Remove dead and weak canes. Properly dispose of clippings.
- Prune crape myrtles and altheas for size and shape.
- Cut English ivy back very hard. It will come back very nicely in the spring.
- Trim mondo grass and liriopse to 4–6 inches tall. Dispose of trimmings.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Dispose of fallen camellia blossoms to prevent blight.
- Pinch off dead flowers from tulips/daffodils. Wait until May to cut foliage, after it turns yellow and dies.

## **April**

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### **Planting**

- Set out most shrubs and trees.
- Divide violets, Shasta daisies, liriopse, ajuga, mums, and other perennials.
- Plant okra, melons, peas, corn, beans, eggplant, cucumbers, and tomatoes.
- Set out summer annuals if danger of frost has past: ageratum, alyssum, begonias, geraniums, dianthus, celosia, marigolds, moss roses, petunias, impatiens, coleus.
- Plant summer/fall blooming bulbs: callas, cannas, dahlias, gladiolus, and gloriosa lilies.

### **Fertilizing**

- Fertilize vegetables at planting according to recommendations.
- Fertilize shrubs if not done in March.

### **Pruning**

- Prune azaleas and other spring-flowering shrubs after blooming.
- Disbud roses and peonies for specimen flowers.
- Lightly shape any formal hedges to remove new growth.

- Apply pre-emerge to turf to prevent crabgrass and other summer weeds (late February in South Mississippi).
- Mulch all landscape bed areas—3 inches in new beds and only 1 inch in existing beds.

### **Home Accent**

- Divide or repot overgrown houseplants. Cut back weak parts to encourage new growth. Apply liquid fertilizer every 2 weeks or as labeled.

### **Blooming**

- Okamee cherries, plums, pears, apples, Chinese snowballs, showy jasmines, redbuds, dogwoods, cherry laurels, maples, Japanese hollies, azaleas, sweet olives, weigelas, wisterias, flowering almonds, Lady Banks roses, buckeyes, knockout roses, mock oranges, fothergillas, royal paulownias.
- Bluebells, daffodils, hyacinths, early irises, pansies, violets.

### **Fruiting**

- Maples, leatherleaf mahonias, yaupon hollies, Chinese hollies, cotoneasters, nandinas, (high-bush blueberries in South Mississippi).



### **Miscellaneous**

- Paint and repair garden furniture and other hardscapes (bird baths, bird houses, mailbox, deck).
- Buy azaleas in bloom to be sure of color.
- Always mulch new plantings to help ensure success.

### **Blooming**

- Encore azaleas, blueberries, fringe trees, blackberries, pyracanthas, hawthorns, pittosporums, Japanese snowballs, pieris, cliftonia, ginkgos, deutzia, sweetshrubs, sweetspires, cotoneasters, oakleaf hydrangeas, roses, spiraea, rhododendrons, and ninebarks.
- Ajuga, alyssum, bleeding-hearts, candytufts, columbines, daffodils, daisies, daylilies, forget-me-nots, grass pinks, irises, Jacob's ladder, lilies-of-the-valley, pansies, phlox, primroses, ranunculus, shooting stars, sweet Williams, thrifts, tulips, vincas, violets.

### **Fruiting**

- Maples, leatherleaf mahonias, chinese hollies, nandinas, (blueberries in South Mississippi).

## May

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### *Planting*

- Select and plant crape myrtles when in color.
- Plant annuals and perennials early in the month, and keep well-watered.
- Take hydrangea cuttings and let root in coarse sand.
- In the shade, plant impatiens, coleus, sweet alyssum, lobelia, and annual dianthus.
- In full sun, plant verbenas, periwinkle, ageratum, marigolds, zinnias, petunias, wax begonias, clematis, four-o'clocks, and portulaca.
- Plant cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, squash, peas, beans, eggplant, corn, okra, parsley, watermelons, and cantaloupes.

### *Fertilizing*

- Fertilize warm-season turfgrass after it turns green and has been mown twice.
- Fertilize all ornamental shrubs.

### *Pest Control*

- Scout for garden pests and diseases: red spiders, thrips, aphids, lacebugs, lacewings, mealy bugs, caterpillars, slugs, snails, mildew, fungus, and crown rot.

## June

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### *Planting*

- Plant crape myrtles in bloom to be sure of their color.
- Plant warm-season grasses: Bermuda, centipede, zoysia, and St. Augustine (June to August).
- Replace turf in deep shade with ground cover: lirioppe, ajuga, vinca, or pachysandra.
- Summer annuals: ageratum, cockscomb, impatiens, marigolds, sunflowers, four-o'clocks, and periwinkle.
- Plant tomatoes late this month to ensure harvest late into fall. Cherry tomatoes and Bella Rosa varieties are good choices for heat tolerance.
- Select daylilies in bloom for planting in your garden.
- Plant zinnias and marigolds now for a second crop of flowers.
- Gladiolus planted now will give lovely fall blooms.

### *Fertilizing*

- Fertilize all ornamental shrubs/trees and annuals/perennials with a slow-release fertilizer.
- Fertilize camellias with azalea-camellia fertilizer if not done earlier in the year.

### *Pruning*

- Prune azaleas, camellias and gardenias after flowers drop and before new buds form.
- Cutting bouquets regularly will keep your plants pruned and prolong the blooming season. Cut in early morning or late afternoon and put into water immediately.
- Graft pecans using the four-flap method.

### *Home Accent*

- Repot house plants during their active growing period: April through September.
- Repot and divide overcrowded ferns.

### *Blooming*

- Big leaf magnolias, pineapple guavas, southern magnolias, gardenias, abelias, Texas sage, gumpo azaleas, smoketrees, chastetrees, crepe myrtles, roses of Sharon, buddleias, and cleyeras.
- Begonias, impatiens, salvias, geraniums, clematis, phlox, sweet William, deutzia.

### *Fruiting*

- Green ashes, aucubas, blueberries, redbuds, wisterias.



- Fertilize tomatoes, cucumbers, and zucchini monthly with 5-10-10.

### *Pest Control*

- Scout the landscape/garden regularly for pests and treat as needed.
- Remove zinnias with powdery mildew and replant.

### *Pruning*

- Prune oleanders after blooming ends.
- Pinch dahlias and mums to ensure a compact growth habit.
- Remove blackberry fruiting canes after harvest. Prune new canes to encourage side branching.
- Remove faded flowers from daisies, daylilies, and other summer flowers.



## **Blooming**

- Chinese parasols, golden raintrees, cletheras, and catalpas.
- Ageratum, balloon flowers, bee balm, begonias, butterfly weeds, coreopsis, cornflowers, gladiolus, hollyhocks, nicotianas, petunias, phlox, scabiosas, Shasta daisies, verbenas.

## **Fruiting**

- Green ashes, aucubas, blueberries, redbuds, peaches.

# July

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## **Planting**

- Plant pumpkin seeds for a Halloween harvest. Larger varieties need to be planted July 2.
- Root cuttings of azaleas, boxwoods, camellias, and gardenias in a fine pine bark/coarse sand mix. Cuttings should be 4–6 inches from new growth with lower leaves removed. Do not let dry out.
- Root cuttings for house plants: ivies, wandering Jews, philodendrons, and begonias.

## **Fertilizing**

- Do not fertilize camellias after July 1.
- Fertilize chrysanthemums around July 15 and cut height in half.
- Fertilize turf if recommended.

## **Pruning**

- Remove faded flowers from crape myrtle to encourage a second blooming.
- Cut back mum height by half before July 15.
- All vegetables must be picked regularly to ensure continued bearing.
- When cutting boxwoods into a hedge, make sure the bases are wider than the tops to allow sunlight to reach the bases of the plants.
- Prune roses to encourage blooms.

## **Miscellaneous**

- Water all ornamentals weekly to a depth of 1 inch if it does not rain.
- Cut grass at a slightly higher level during hot weather to reduce stress.
- Treat turf with a post-emergent herbicide product to remove unwanted weeds.

## **Home Accent**

- Do not leave house plants in your closed home over an extended vacation. Either water and place them under a shade tree or have someone water them for you.

## **Blooming**

- Sourwoods and Pee Gee hydrangeas.
- Cleomes, Four-o'clocks, impatiens, marigolds, periwinkles, plumbagos, portulaca, ageratum, zinnias, butterfly weeds, cosmos, dahlias, daylilies, rudbeckias, scabiosas, Shasta daisies, verbenas, veronicas.

## **Fruiting**

- Aucuba, royal palownias, peaches, apples, pears.



# August

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## **Planning**

- Plan beds for bulbs. Order tulips, hyacinths, irises, daffodils, narcissus, and amaryllis.

## **Planting**

- Plant daylilies in a sunny location. They need to be well-established before winter.
- Divide and transplant Louisiana irises, Easter lilies, cannas, liriopé, ajuga, and Shasta daisies.
- Plant mums for September bloom and fall color.
- Plant marigolds, asters, zinnias, and celosia to replace faded annuals.

- Plant seeds of calendulas, columbines, English daisies, forget-me-nots, pansies, and violets.

## **Fertilizing**

- If acid-loving plants including azaleas, camellias, and gardenias show signs of chlorosis (yellowing of leaves), treat with iron chelate.
- Feed mums with a complete fertilizer every 2 weeks and water thoroughly.



## Pruning

- Cut back annuals such as impatiens and vincas to encourage fall blooms.
- Disbud camellias, dahlias, and chrysanthemums to produce specimen blooms.
- Cut back rose canes to 24–30 inches from the ground for autumn blooms.

## Watering

- Water your garden deeply but infrequently throughout the month.
- Water early in the morning if possible.
- Water potted plants and hanging baskets daily.
- Make sure azaleas, camellias, and fruit plants stay well-watered because they are forming flower buds for next year.

## September

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### Planning

- Build or buy a compost bin in anticipation of autumn leaves.

### Planting

- Plant cool season vegetables: broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage, spinach, potatoes, lettuce, carrots, beets, radishes, and English peas.
- Sow hardy annuals: sweet alyssums, calendulas, annual pinks, snapdragons, sweet peas.
- Sow rye grass seed in winter lawns (only when necessary).

### Fertilizing

- Stop feeding mums when the buds start showing color.
- Don't fertilize ornamentals after August 15.

### Miscellaneous

- Apply pre-emerge herbicide to the lawn for winter weed prevention.
- Turn your compost pile.

## October

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### Planting

- Plant spring-flowering bulbs, except tulips and hyacinths. Place these in the refrigerator for 6 weeks before planting in late December or early January.
- Pot basil, chives, parsley, rosemary, and sage for your sunny kitchen window.

### Miscellaneous

- Mow weekly and leave clippings on the lawn.
- Turn your compost pile.
- Feed the birds.

### Blooming

- Pampas grass.
- Ageratums, angel's trumpets, balsams, begonias, caladiums, cannas, celosia, clematis, dahlias, four-o'clocks, lilies, hostas, impatiens, marigolds, periwinkles, phlox, portulacas, rattle boxes, salvias, zinnias.

### Fruiting

- Golden raintrees, beautyberries, apples, pears.

- Propagate by layering: Scrape the underside of a strong branch, bend it down to the ground, cover with soil, and weigh down with a brick. Check for roots after 3 months.
- Pick flowers in bloom and dry them for future arrangements. Bundle flowers together and hang them upside-down in a dry, sheltered area.
- Repot houseplants. Prune away damaged foliage and apply fertilizer.

### Blooming

- Cannas, cosmos, copper plants, marigolds, periwinkles, salvias, ageratums, coleus, asters, celosias, chrysanthemums, coral vines, ginger lilies, morning glories, petunias, phlox, rattle boxes, spider lilies, torenias, vincas.

### Fruiting

- Golden raintrees, beautyberries, dogwoods, ginkgos, pyracanthas.



## *Fertilizing*

- Test soil in your garden to monitor the balance of minerals.
- Apply pre-emerge herbicide to the lawn if you have not already.

## *Pruning*

- Remove damaged and dead wood from trees.
- Pick the blossom-like fruit of golden rain trees, and let them dry for winter arrangements.

## *Miscellaneous*

- Dig up caladiums with foliage intact, allow to dry, remove dried foliage, and store in peat moss in a cool, dark place for replanting next year.
- Force bulbs for indoor show (paper-white, narcissus, lilies of the valley, jonquils, or hyacinths). Place the bulb on gravel and water enough to cover the roots; keep in a dark place until the root system is established and

- sprouts reach 3 inches. Bring gradually into the light and refill the container with water to the original level.
- Make sure the birds in your garden have food, shelter, and water.
- Place leaves in the compost bin or mulch them with your lawn mower.

## *Blooming*

- Camellia sasanquas.
- Mums, marigolds, periwinkles, salvias, sasanquas, golden raintrees, roses, ageratums, asters, camellias, celosias, colchicums, dahlias, petunias, salvias, and zinnias.

## *Fruiting*

- Golden raintrees, beautyberries, dogwoods, ginkgos, pyracanthas, apples, yaupons.

## **November**

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### *Planting*

- Plant shrubs and trees after the soil cools.
- Plant summer-blooming perennials: irises, daylilies, and daisies.
- Plant winter and spring annuals: pansies, pinks, flowering cabbage and kale.
- Root rose cuttings and other woody ornamentals.

### *Pruning*

- Remove dead limbs and lightly prune evergreen shrubs.
- Cut off tops of brown perennials; leave roots in the soil.
- **Do not prune** spring-flowering shrubs such as azaleas, hydrangeas, mock oranges, spireas, and flowering quince because flower buds are already forming.
- **Delay pruning** of most trees and shrubs until February since any new growth stimulated by pruning may be killed by a sudden freeze.

### *Miscellaneous*

- Put leaves and spent annuals into your compost bin.
- Add mulch to your garden and all ornamental beds for winter protection.
- Repair and sharpen garden tools; store with a light coating of oil to prevent rusting.
- Build bird feeders and houses.

### *Blooming*

- Impatiens, cannas, roses, witch hazel, gerber daisies, sweet olives, camellias, sasanquas, Japanese plums, and poinsettias.

### *Fruiting*

- Dogwoods, pyracanthas, yaupons, Chinese hollies.



## **December**

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### *Protecting*

- Protect moveable plants from sudden changes in temperature by bringing them indoors.
- Protect tender plants by placing layers of mulch, or pine straw, to a depth of 6–8 inches.
- Water plants well if there is a frost warning. Otherwise, water as the plants begin to thaw.

### *Planting*

- At the end of the month, plant tulips and hyacinths that have been in the fridge for 6 weeks.
- Plant many types of bare-root trees: fruits, nuts, or citrus.
- Plant dormant shrubs: azaleas, camellias, nandinas, wax Ligustrum, Indian hawthornes,



pyracanthas, mock oranges, hydrangeas, flowering quince, and spireas.

- Plant herbs for a sunny window: tarragon, chives, oregano, marjoram, and rosemary.

### **Pruning**

- Prune trees to remove damaged or dead wood only.
- Cut off the tops of brown perennials; leave roots in the soil.
- Do not prune spring-flowering shrubs.
- Ferns will come back from the ground; cut back brown fronds.
- Cut mistletoe out of trees.

### **Indoor Plants**

- House plants to consider: African violets, amaryllises, begonias, bromeliads, Christmas cacti, dieffenbachias, ferns, philodendrons, scheffleras, and weeping figs.
- Feed houseplants twice during the winter months.

### **Miscellaneous**

- To maintain a live Christmas tree in good condition, mix in a 2-liter bottle: 8 oz non-diet soda, 2 oz vinegar, and 1 oz mouthwash. Fill the bottle with water. Keep the base of the tree in this solution. After Christmas, have your tree turned into mulch.

### **Blooming**

- Fatsias, Otto Luyken laurels.
- Narcissus, amaryllis.

### **Fruiting**

- Beautyberries, dogwoods, pyracanthas, yaupons, burning bushes, Chinese hollies.

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The woody ornamentals listed are some of the more popular plants that begin their flowering period during those months.

Many of these bloom over multiple months and are not listed for each month. Plants may begin the bloom period 2–4 weeks earlier in coastal parts of South Mississippi. The annual and perennial flowers listed are some of the ones that do well during the months listed. The plants listed as fruiting are some of the more popular ones fruiting during the months listed. This list is not exhaustive. For more specific information, find these publications at <http://extension.msstate.edu/publications>:

Information Sheet 0204 *Pruning Landscape Plants*

Information Sheet 0207 *Propagating Plants for the Home Landscape*

Information Sheet 0656 *Azaleas for the Landscape*

Information Sheet 0965 *Transplanting Trees and Shrubs in the Landscape*

Information Sheet 1978 *Nitrogen Fertilization of Landscape Trees and Shrubs*

Publication 1012 *Care and Selection of Indoor Plants*

Publication 1091 *Garden Tabloid* (Vegetables section)

Publication 1322 *Establish and Manage Your Home Lawn*

Publication 2007 *Crape Myrtle: Flower of the South*

Publication 2301 *Mulches for the Landscape*

Publication 2303 *Protecting Plants from Cold Temperatures*

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**EXTENSION**

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