



GNO Gardening Magazine



January 2021



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Cover photo:

Flowers of a Saucer Magnolia
(*Magnolia x soulaneana*)

Look At Me – *Saucer Magnolia (Magnolia x soulangeana)*

Driving down the street you may suddenly be amazed at this beautiful leafless tree ablaze with pinkish purple flowers. If so, you may have just encountered the saucer magnolia, *Magnolia x soulangeana*. Saucer magnolia is a hybrid first created by a French cavalry officer in 1820 when he crossed *Magnolia denudata* with *Magnolia lilliflora*. It is now one of the most widely used magnolias in horticulture.

Magnolia x soulangeana is grown as a large multi-stemmed shrub (25' X 25') or as a

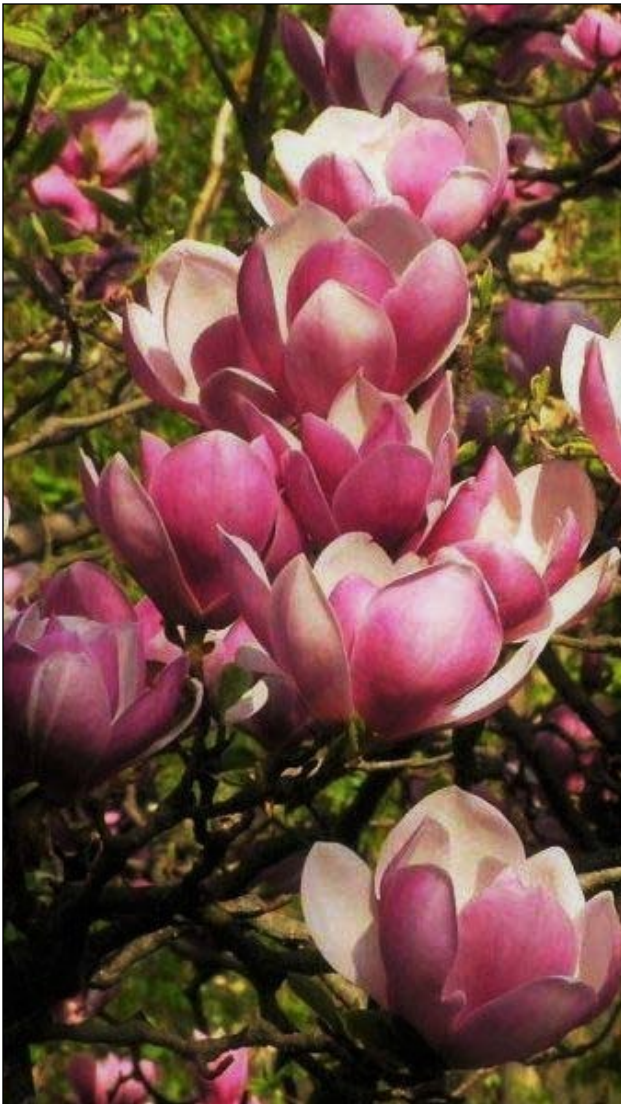


Figure 1: *Magnolia x soulangeana* "Satisfaction"



Figure 2: *Magnolia x soulangeana* "Alexandrina"

small tree (20'-25' tall). The flowers emerge spectacularly on a bare tree as the weather begins to warm. Shortly afterward, the simple, dark green, shiny, obovate leaves sprout alternately on stout stems. *Magnolia x soulangeana* is a true deciduous tree. There are multiple varieties available with flowers of various shades of white, pink and maroon. The flowers are globular to cup-and-saucer shaped and very large – from 4" to 14" depending on variety – and very fragrant.

Magnolia x soulangeana grows best in moist, acidic, well-drained soils rich in organic matter but can tolerate divergent soil conditions. It can be grown in full sun to partial shade and doesn't tolerate soil moisture extremes (too dry or too wet). When grown under good conditions, it has very few insect and disease problems.

When you see *Magnolia x soulangeana*, take a little time to enjoy its fragrant beautiful floral display because, though spectacular, the flower show only lasts a week or two.

~Dr. Joe Willis

January Vegetable Planting Guide

Crop	Some Recommended Varieties
Beets	Detroit Dark Red, Kestrel, Red Ace F1, Ruby Queen
Broccoli	Arcadia, Diplomat, Gypsy, Packman, Premium Crop, Windsor Greenbelt, Patron
Cauliflower	Candid Charm, Cumberland, Freedom, Incline, Majestic, Snow Crown, Wentworth
Cabbage	Blue Vantage, Platinum Dynasty, Stonehead, Cheers, Blue Dynasty, Emblem, Rio Verde
Chinese Cabbage	None Given
Carrots	Danvers 128, Purple Haze, Thumbelina, Apache, Enterprise, Maverick, Sugar Snax 54
Snow peas	None Given
Collards	Champions, Flash, Georgia Southern, Top Bunch, Vates
Kale	None Given
Kohlrabi	Early Purple Vienna, Early White, Vienna, Winner
Lettuce	Esmeralda, New Red Fire F1, Nevada, Tall Guzmaine Elite
Mustard Greens	Florida Broadleaf, Greenwave, Red Giant, Southern Giant Curled, Savannah, Tendergreen
Onions	Red: Red Creole, Southern Belle; White: Candy, Savannah Sweet; Vidalia: Candy Ann, Caramelo, Century, Georgia Boy, Mata Hari
Spinach	Bloomsdale Long Standing, Melody, Tyee, Unipak 151
Radishes	Cherriette, Champion, White Icicle, April Cross
Shallots	Matador, Prism
Swiss Chard	None Given
Turnip Greens	Alamo, All Top, Purple, Top White Globe, Seven Top, Southern Green, Top Star, Tokyo Cross
Tomatoes (seeds)	Bella Rosa, Fletcher, Tribute, BHN 1021, Amelia, Dixie Red

Weed of the Month

Carolina geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*)

This month's winter weed is one that takes advantage of thinly-growing turfgrass and can also pop up in our landscape beds and vegetable gardens. Though easily pulled by hand, Carolina geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*) can be a problem if it is present in large numbers in our lawns and landscapes.

Wild geranium is a biennial, and actively grows in the cool season. It is common statewide and across the southern United States. Some good identifying characteristics include pink stems, a basal rosette growth habit, and deeply lobed, almost circular leaves. Flowers emerge in the springtime and are usually pale purple with five petals, measuring approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " across. The seeds form in a capsule shaped like an elongated bird's beak, hence the nickname "cranesbill geranium" in some areas.

Carolina geranium can be effectively controlled in landscape beds and gardens by hand pulling, as it has a very shallow taproot. Mulching in our gardens with a 2-3-inch-deep covering is also a good way to prevent seed from germinating once

temperatures begin to cool in the fall. Hoeing and the use of tillage in gardens can bring fresh seeds to the surface, so mulching should be used when possible and soil disturbed minimally. Pre-emergent



Carolina geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*) growing in a garden.



Red stems of Carolina geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*).

herbicides also work on Carolina geranium, look for products containing dithiopyr (Dimension), isoxaben (Gallery), or trifluralin (Preen). Be sure to read the labels of these products before applying them to check that they are safe

to use around the species of plants in your landscape.

In lawns, there are several cultural control methods that work well to control populations of Carolina geranium. Healthy lawns are able to outcompete this cool season weed as well as many other species. Be sure to address any soil fertility and pH issues on an annual basis by soil testing and applying the recommended inputs.

Regular mowing to an appropriate height (check the LSU AgCenter [Louisiana Lawns Best Management](#)

Weed of the Month

Carolina geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*)

[Practices](#) publication for this information) also helps turf to remain thick enough to effectively shade the seed bank in the soil and prevent Carolina geranium from germinating. Applying nitrogen annually following soil test recommendations also encourages a thick, vigorous lawn that outcompetes many cool season weeds.

If chemical control is desired, there are options for the home lawn. Pre-emergent herbicides are effective when spread as temperatures fall consistently below 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Simazine and atrazine work well in St. Augustine, Centipede and Zoysiagrass, with simazine effective in actively growing Bermudagrass and atrazine when it is dormant. Post-emergent selective herbicide options are many, with these active ingredients being shown as effective in turf- simazine, atrazine (be sure Bermudagrass is dormant), metsulfuron, 2,4-D + dicamba + mecoprop, 2,4-D + dicamba + mecoprop + carfentrazone, thienacarbazone + iodosulfuron + dicamba, penoxulam + sulfentrazone + dicamba + 2,4-D, metsulfuron + dicamba, and metsulfuron + sulfentrazone being options. For a full listing check out the LSU AgCenter Louisiana Home Lawn Series Fact Sheet [Here](#)).

Carolina geranium can be a persistent cool season problem, but luckily many control options exist. Try hand pulling before applying a herbicide, they pull up so easily that this activity can be a real joy.

~Anna Timmerman



Carolina geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*) flowers.

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Home Composting Certificate Course

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What's Bugging You – Imported Cabbage Worm (*Pieris rapae*)

By now you've probably been harvesting from your cool season vegetable garden for quite some time. And if you're growing cole crops (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, collards, kale, turnip, mustard) then I bet you've seen this butterfly (Figure 1) flying around your garden. The yellowish-white butterflies have several black spots



Figure 2: Imported cabbage worm eggs. Note the yellow color and deep ridges.



Figure 1: Adult female *Pieris rapae* butterfly.

on their wings and a wingspread of about 1 inch – males have one black spot, females have two black spots. Adult females lay yellow oblong eggs singly on either side of the leaf. The eggs are attached at one end and deeply ridged (Figure 2).

The larvae are velvety green with a narrow orange stripe down the middle of the back and a yellowish stripe along each side of the body. Mature larvae are about 1¼-inches long (Figure 3).

Imported cabbageworm (*Pieris rapae*) damage is similar to cabbage looper (*Trichoplusia ni*) injury. Imported cabbageworms feed near the center of plants and do more damage to the cabbage head. They do not limit feeding to areas between leaf veins, but chew through leaves indiscriminately (Figure 4). Left uncontrolled, they can do tremendous amounts of damage.



Figure 4: Cabbage plant destroyed by imported cabbage worm caterpillars.

In the home garden, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) adequately controls cabbage worms. Insecticidal soap, carbaryl (Sevin), malathion, cyfluthrin, or permethrin are also effective, especially against young larvae. Tiny parasitic wasps and predatory insects provide common natural controls.

~Dr. Joe Willis



Figure 3: *Pieris rapae* caterpillar.

Super Plant Spotlight– Frostproof Gardenia

The best time to plant hardy shrubs and trees in our area is October to March. So now is a great time to consider putting in some Frostproof gardenias. Gardenia is one of the quintessential southern plants and Frostproof has earned the Louisiana Super Plant medallion. Gardenias in general require well-drained acidic soil (pH 4.5-5.5), rich in organic matter and annual fertilization. Frostproof is a repeat bloomer with the heaviest flowering in Spring and repeat flowering throughout the growing season. It has a dense, compact growth habit and seldom needs pruning. The mature size (5'Tx4'W) make it an excellent

choice for most any landscape location and it can be used en masse for an evergreen fragrant hedgerow. Cold temperatures are never really a problem for gardenias in our area but Frostproof is more cold tolerant than standard gardenia varieties and pretty adaptable to most growing conditions so it is a good choice for the northern areas of Louisiana. Frostproof has clear white double blooms that definitely have that heady gardenia fragrance. Because of its low profile and small mature size, Frostproof also makes a great container specimen. It's hard to miss with this wonderful Louisiana Super Plant.

~ Dr. Joe Willis



Frostproof Gardenia

Evergreen Shrub
Full Sun to Part Shade
Grows 5' Tall by 4' Wide
Space about 4' Apart
Fragrant, double, velvety-white flowers
Heavy flowering in May and sporadic through summer
More cold tolerant
Tough and adaptable; not as finicky as other cultivars
Excellent lower growing Gardenia



LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants

[Click here or go to:](https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/our_offices/research_stations/hammond/features/super_plants)

https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/our_offices/research_stations/hammond/features/super_plants
to find a nearly complete list of LSU AgCenter Super Plants

Try These Basil Varieties

Basil is the most cultivated herb in the world and is a beautiful ornamental as well. The most commonly grown varieties belong to the *Ocimum basilicum* species. However, there are innumerable varieties of this basil species, other closely related species with their varieties, and multiple hybrids. Basil varieties come in a plethora of shapes, sizes, colors, textures and flavors. Everyone has their two or three favorites they always grow and usually try one or two new varieties regularly just to see how they'll perform. I'd like to introduce to you three basil varieties that I think you might enjoy.

These three basil varieties have one trait in common – they do not produce seed. Two of them rarely ever flower and the third one flowers prolifically but the flowers are sterile, so no seed is produced. Some of you are way ahead of me already. If they don't produce seed, that means the only way they are reproduced is asexually through cuttings. With these varieties, you have to purchase plants and not seed.

The first two varieties rarely, if ever, flower. They are Pesto Perpetuo and Amazel.

Pesto Perpetuo (Figure 1), available from Burpee Seed and Territorial Seed, is a flavorful culinary variety with eye-

catching variegated leaves – light green leaves with cream-colored variegation with pleasing fragrance. Planted in full sun, the plant will easily reach 24" in height but stays tight, columnar and dense with a strong central stem. With adequate lighting, the plant can be moved indoors during cold weather.



Figure 1: Pesto Perpetuo basil. Note the columnar growth and eye-catching variegation.



Figure 2: Amazel basil. Note the nice compact structure and it is Downy Mildew Resistant.

Amazel (Figure 2), available from Proven Winners, is a wonderful, sweet basil variety with great taste and aroma. This variety may flower periodically and more heavily late in the season, but the flowers are sterile. Therefore, flower initiation does not cause cessation of leaf and shoot production. The mature plant size in full sun is 24"-36" tall and 12"-24" wide. Amazel is a hybrid variety with larger leaves than Pesto Perpetuo. A real PLUS that Amazel brings is that it is Downy Mildew Resistant. See LSU AgCenter Publication 3358 for more information about Sweet Basil Downy Mildew.

The third variety I'd like to introduce you to is African Blue Basil (Figure 3) available from GrowJoy. African Blue Basil is a chance cross between *Ocimum basilicum* and *Ocimum kilimandscharicum*. This is a sterile perennial basil variety with beautiful purple leaf coloration and a strong camphor aroma. The mature plant size is

Try These Basil Varieties

about 24" tall and 18" wide. Aside from leaf coloration and fragrance, another difference between African Blue Basil and the previous two varieties is that African Blue Basil is a prolific flowering variety. Pollinators love this variety and it is constantly abuzz with activity. Flower fertilization usually causes nectar production to cease. Because African Blue Basil flowers are sterile, they produce nectar for a longer period of time because there is no fertilization to trigger nectar production to cease.

This Spring, try something new in the world of basil.

~Dr. Joe Willis

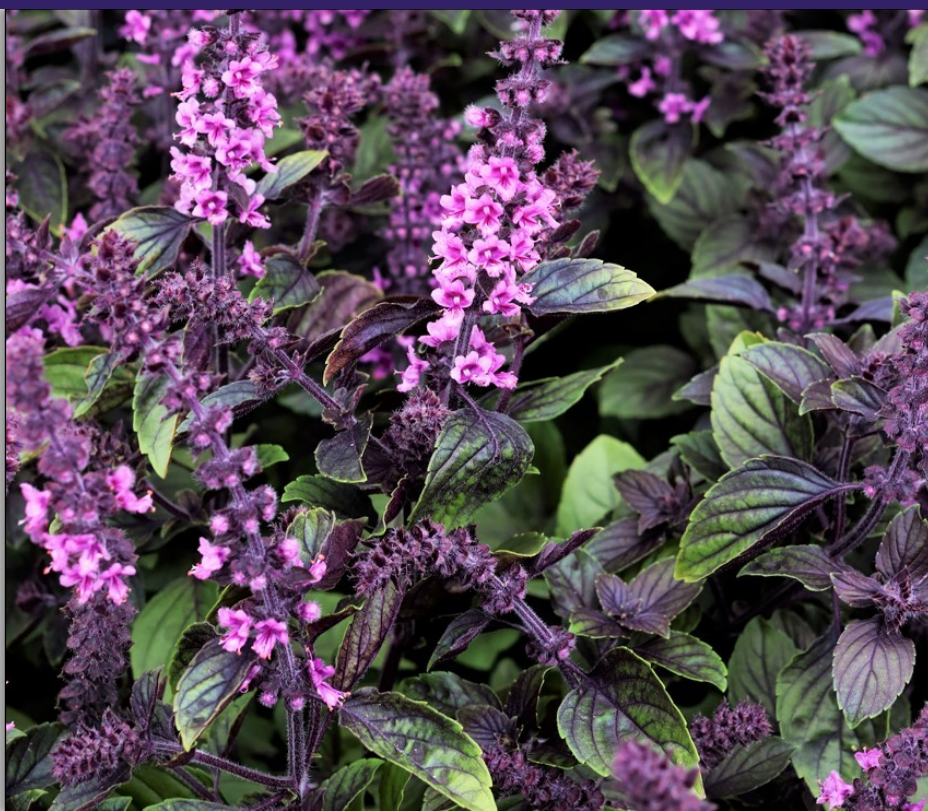


Figure 3: African Blue Basil. Note the attractive leaf coloration and prolific flowering.

In the Kitchen with Austin

Rosemary Nuts

Some of my fondest memories from childhood were of me gathering pecans for my mother and grandmother to make pecan candy and fudge for the holidays. Nuts, no matter the variety, are wonderful during this time of year. This recipe is great as a nibble with cocktails or a gift for someone special.

Ingredients:

1 lb. of your favorite nuts, raw

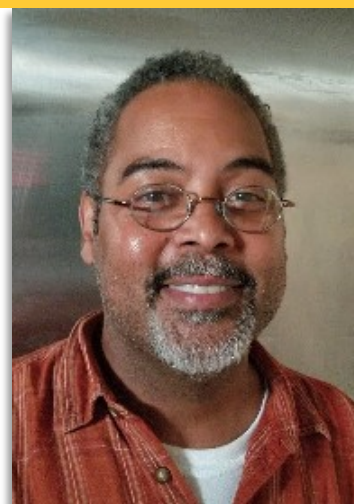
2 Tbs. minced fresh rosemary leaves

½ tsp. cayenne pepper

2 tsp. light brown sugar

1 Tbs. kosher salt

1 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted



Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.

Spread the nuts out on a sheet pan. Toast in the oven until slightly browned, about 5 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine the rosemary, cayenne, sugar, salt, and butter. Toss the warm nuts with the spiced butter and serve.

Bon Manger!

Local Independent Garden Centers

Orleans

Urban Roots	2375 Tchoupitoulas St., New Orleans, LA 70130	(504) 522-4949
The Plant Gallery	9401 Airline Hwy., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 488-8887
Harold's Plants	1135 Press St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 947-7554
We Bite Rare and Unusual Plants	1225 Mandeville St., New Orleans, LA 70117	(504) 380-4628
Hot Plants	1715 Feliciana St., New Orleans, LA 70117	www.hotplantsnursery.com
Delta Floral Native Plants	Pop Up Locations	(504) 224-8682
Pelican Greenhouse Sales	2 Celebration Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124	(504) 483-9437
Grow Wiser Garden Supply	2109 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70116	(504) 644-4713
Jefferson Feed Mid-City	309 N. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119	(504) 488-8118
Jefferson Feed Uptown	6047 Magazine St., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 218-4220
Crazy Plant Bae	800 N. Claiborne Ave., New Orleans LA 70119	(504) 327-7008

Jefferson

Perino's Garden Center	3100 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Metairie, LA 70002	(504) 834-7888
Rose Garden Center	4005 Westbank Expressway, Marerro, LA 70072	(504) 341-5664
Rose Garden Center	5420 Lapalco Blvd., Marrero, LA 70072	(504) 347-8777
Banting's Nursery	3425 River Rd., Bridge City, LA 70094	(504) 436-4343
Jefferson Feed	4421 Jefferson Hwy., Jefferson, LA 70121	(504) 733-8572
Nine Mile Point Plant Nursery	2141 River Rd., Westwego, LA 70094	(504) 436-4915
Palm Garden Depot	351 Hickory Ave., Harahan, LA 70123	(504) 305-6170
Double M Feed Harahan	8400 Jefferson Hwy., Harahan, LA 70123	(504) 738-5007
Double M Feed Metairie	3212 W. Esplanade Ave., Metairie, LA 70002	(504) 835-9800
Double M Feed Terrytown	543 Holmes Blvd., Terrytown, LA 70056	(504) 361-4405
Sunrise Trading Co. Inc.	42 3 rd St., Kenner, LA 70062	(504) 469-0077
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 887-4336
Creative Gardens & Landscape	2309 Manhattan Blvd., Harvey, LA 70058	(504) 367-9099
Charvet's Garden Center	4511 Clearview Parkway, Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 888-7700
Barber Laboratories Native Plants	6444 Jefferson Hwy., Harahan, LA 70123	(504) 739-5715

Plaquemines

Southern Gateway Garden Center	107 Timber Ridge St., Belle Chasse, LA 70037	(504) 393-9300
Belle Danse Orchids	14079 Belle Chasse Hwy., Belle Chasse, LA 70037	(504) 419-5416

St. Charles

Plant & Palm Tropical Outlet	10018 River Rd., St. Rose, LA 70087	(504) 468-7256
Martin's Nursery & Landscape	320 3 rd St., Luling, LA 70070	(985) 785-6165

St. Bernard

Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette, LA 70043	(504) 682-9911
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Soil Vendors

Schmelly's Dirt Farm (Compost Only)	https://www.schmellys.com/compost-sales/	
Laughing Buddha Garden Center	4516 Clearview Pkwy., Metairie, LA 70006	(504) 887-4336
Reliable Soil	725 Reverand Richard Wilson Dr., Kenner, LA 70062	(504) 467-1078
Renaissance Gardens	9123 W. Judge Perez Dr., Chalmette, LA 70043	(504) 682-9911
Rock n' Soil NOLA	9119 Airline Hwy., New Orleans, LA 70118	(504) 488-0908

***If you would like your licensed retail nursery listed, please email gnogardening@agcenter.lsu.edu**

January Checklist/Garden Tips

Planting cool season vegetables and bedding plants continues. Although exceptionally cold weather can cause problems, winter weather is mostly mild. Watch the weather and avoid setting out transplants when a hard freeze below the upper 20s is predicted.

During cold of winter weather the water coming out of the tap can be decidedly chilly. When filling up your watering can to water your indoor plants, don't just turn on the cold water tap. Turn on both cold and hot water and adjust the temperature of the water coming out of the faucet until it feels tepid or barely warm. This is healthier for tropical houseplants and will prevent the spotting of African violet foliage.

Resolve to pick more flowers from your garden for indoor arrangements this year. Most gardeners are too reluctant to harvest the flowers growing in their gardens, when flowers can enrich our home interiors in wonderful ways. Think how nice it would be to have a little vase of pansies, snapdragons or stock on the table beside you right now.

You must plant any spring flowering bulbs you have been refrigerating by early January, or you will be too late. You cannot keep the bulbs, such as tulips and hyacinths, and plant them next year

Now is a good time to make hardwood cuttings of such plants as pears, figs, roses and hydrangeas. Cuttings should be taken from the ends of branches and be 6 to 8 inches long.

Bare root rose bushes are arriving at local nurseries and garden centers. If you choose to plant bare root roses, January is the month to do it, or by the end of February at the latest. Containerized roses may also be planted as soon as they become available at the nurseries, but can be planted as late as April.

Add leaves falling from deciduous trees to your compost pile as they become available. Speed decomposition by chopping the leaves and sprinkling some nitrogen fertilizer over the leaves as you build the pile. Keep the piles evenly moist but not soggy. Turning the pile occasionally will also speed decomposition.

Whenever practical, continue to deadhead cool season annuals such as pansies, snapdragons and dianthus to keep them blooming through the spring.

Pansies and other cool season bedding plants may bloom less during the mid-winter period but should pick-up again in the late winter and early spring. If the foliage color is a good deep green and the plants seem to be growing well, you shouldn't need to fertilize now. Pansies are, however, heavy feeders. If the foliage is even slightly pale and if the growth is less vigorous, fertilize every two to three weeks with a 20-20-20 soluble fertilizer according to label directions until the color and vigor improves.

Root crops, such as radish, carrot, turnip and beet, should be direct seeded right where they will grow this month. Young plants may need some protection from temperatures below the mid-twenties.

After your Holiday cactus plant stops blooming, don't forget to move it into a sunny window for the rest of the winter. Keep it evenly moist but not constantly wet as this promotes root rot. In April, you may move it to a spot outside that receives morning sun for the summer.

Lawn Care Do's & Don't's

January is typically the least active month for lawn care. Now is a great chance to make plans and prepare for the coming growing season.

Do's:

1. You may apply selective herbicides to eliminate broad leaf weeds in the lawn.
2. Mulch fall leaves and let them decompose in place if possible or collect them with a bagging mower and add them to your compost pile or use them as mulch in your gardens.
3. Cool damp weather is ideal for the appearance of Large Patch Disease in your lawn.
[Click here to find information about large patch disease from the LSU AgCenter.](#)
4. Take a soil test. Test kits are available in our offices in the Botanical Gardens, the Yenni Building, and New Orleans City Hall as well as local garden centers. Follow this link to see Dr. Joe demonstrate how to take a soil sample: <https://www.facebook.com/1030624690304124/videos/1452161988150390/>
5. Sharpen lawn mower blades and perform general maintenance on your lawn mower.
6. Make a schedule for pesticide and fertilizer applications.
7. Be prepared to apply pre-emergent herbicides next month if you have had problems with crabgrass or goosegrass in the past.
8. Keep an eye out for insect pests and treat as necessary.

Don't's

1. Do not spread fill over the lawn until it is actively growing again in the spring.
2. Do not apply fertilizer to the lawn again until April.
3. Do not apply phosphorous winterizer to the lawn without taking a soil sample first. We have ample amounts of phosphorous in our soil already.
4. Do not attempt to install a new lawn until spring.
5. Do not aerate the lawn.
6. Do not dethatch the lawn.

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Dr. Joe Willis
Orleans Parish
Horticulture Agent
(504)483-9471

Anna Timmerman
Jefferson Parish
Horticulture Agent
(504)736-6519

Chris Dunaway
St. Charles Parish
Horticulture Agent
(985)785-4473

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