



December In the Garden

This month in your garden:

- **Bring in** containerized tropicals: Plumerias, crotons, dracaenas, etc.
- **Deadhead** and **feed** cool-season color and vegetables with an organic slow-release fertilizer such as Microlife Flower and Vegetable or Happy Frog Fruit and Flower.
- **Continue to plant** cool weather color: pansies, snapdragons, and cyclamen.
- **Plant herbs and winter veggies.** Cilantro, parsley, dill, mint, lavender and rosemary. Lettuce, spinach, arugula and mustard greens can also still be started from seed.
- **Add** edible flowers in your garden – such as calendula, dianthus, marigolds, nasturtiums, pansies, violas, and violets - transplants can still be added this month (can be added to salad bowl)
- **Birds** - Don't forget to keep seed feeders full and fresh water in birdbaths. Put out suet cakes — the extra protein helps keep our feathered friends warm in the winter months.
- **Lawn**- Mow fallen leaves with a mulching mower. When the lawn can't take more leaves, add to flower beds. When beds are full of mulched leaves, add them to the compost bin.
- **Freezes** - Have frost cloth on hand to cover tender plants in case of freezing weather. Wrap plants completely down to ground level. The fewer drafts that move under the frost cloth, the better.
- **Water** -Continue to deep water trees and shrubs. A well-hydrated plant holds up to frosts and freezes better than a drought-stressed plant.

December 2023

Save The Date

December –

Meeting – Thursday, December 7th
Sandra Hartgrove's garden 1:00

January –

Meeting – Thursday, January 18th
NFC clubhouse 1:00
Plant Exchange & herbal treats
guest speaker- Lucinda Owen
Montgomery County Master Gardener
Bullet Proof Plants Hardy for Inclement Weather

Garden Workshop – Thursday, January 25th – to be confirmed
NFC Clubhouse
Bee Baths & Honey Tasting
guest speaker- *Jen Rose*
<https://www.jenroseart.com/beecups>

February –

Meeting – Thursday, February 8th
NFC clubhouse 1:00
guest speaker- *Alex Lekometros,*
Bungalow Blooms
Summer Cutting Gardens

**Garden Workshop* – Thursday, February 15st
NFC Clubhouse
Seed workshop - To be confirmed
guest speaker- Kim Meyer
Shamba Ya Amani Gardens

**Field Trip* – Thursday, February 22^{nd*}
Buchanan's Nursery

March –

Meeting – Thursday, March 7th
Nfc clubhouse 1:00
guest speaker- *Lauren Simpson*
St. Julian's Crossing
Creating a Pollinator Paradise at Home

Field Trip – Thursday, March 21st?
Houston Arboretum? Working on this

Garden Workshop – Thursday, March 28th
Location: NFC Clubhouse
Make Your Own Easter Floral Arrangement
guest speaker- *Pondersosa Blooms*

ABOUT OUR MARCH MEETING....

“Creating a Pollinator Paradise at Home”

Calling all neighbors! Pollinators and other wildlife face many challenges to their survival, and they need our help. The good news is that we can take simple steps to help them—right here, right now, right in our own gardens. In this presentation, Lauren Simpson introduces our pollinators and shares simple techniques for transforming our own garden into a beautiful, native-plant paradise—one that supports wildlife and pleases neighbors!



(Native-plant seeds from the speaker’s own gardens will also be shared.)

*Photo courtesy of University of Houston Law Center

BIO: Since early 2015, and in her individual capacity, Lauren Simpson has transformed her home gardens into a wildlife-friendly habitat, currently a Certified Wildlife Habitat, Monarch Waystation, Certified Monarch Garden, and Certified Butterfly Garden. She promotes insect conservation and habitat gardening through presentations, events, interviews, and articles, as well as through a website and Instagram and Facebook communities under the appellation “St. Julian’s Crossing Wildlife Habitat”—the name adopted for her family’s Monarch Waystation. Ms. Simpson is a member of local chapters of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), Native Prairies Association of Texas, and North American Butterfly Association. She has also received Level 1 and Level 2 certifications through the NPSOT Native Landscape Certification Program (NLCP), has attended the “Monarch Conservation Workshop: Train the Trainer” training, and chairs the NPSOT subcommittee for the NLCP Advocacy companion class. Independent of her naturalist activities, Ms. Simpson is a Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Houston Law Center, teaching Lawyering Skills and Strategies (LSS). She is a spring 2016 recipient of the University of Houston Teaching Excellence Award (Instructor/Clinical category); one of three 2018 AALS Teachers of the Year selected by the Law Center; and the 2017, 2018, 2019 (co-recipient), 2021, 2022, and 2023 Student Bar Association Professor of the Year for Law Center faculty teaching in the part-time program. In spring 2023, her LSS team had the honor of receiving the 2023 UH Group Teaching Excellence Award

Garden Happenings this Month

Bayou Bend



Discover an immersive Christmas experience at Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens. A dazzling bridge brings you into a winter wonderland featuring thousands of lights throughout the 14-acre estate.

<https://www.mfah.org/calendar/christmas-village-bayou-bend/202212091730>



Holiday Floral Workshop Saturday, Dec. 22nd 12pm – 1pm

Join us for a Holiday Floral Workshop with Ponderosa Blooms!

In this workshop you will learn how to make a stunning holiday floral centerpiece. Bring your friends and family along!

Purchase tickets [here](#).

A graphic for a 'Holiday Floral Workshop'. It features a dark red banner with the title 'Holiday Floral Workshop' in white serif font. Below the banner, the date and time 'Friday Dec. 22nd 12pm-1pm' and the instructor 'Taught by: Ponderosa Blooms' are listed. The location '611 E 11th St. Houston, Tx' is at the bottom. The background includes a photo of a floral arrangement and a pair of white-handled scissors on a wooden surface.

**Holiday Floral
Workshop**

Friday Dec. 22nd
12pm-1pm

Taught by:
Ponderosa Blooms

611 E 11th St.
Houston, Tx



New this holiday season at the Garden, more than 50 larger-than-life Chinese lantern installations come to life in stunning displays that showcase the beauty of nature and celebrate the promise of the Lunar New Year in a spectacular way. <https://hbg.org/series/radiant-nature/>



Christmas Strolls: December 5-22, 2023

Stroll Hours: Tuesday-Saturday from 6-9 p.m. (last entry 8:30 p.m.)

<https://shangrilagardens.org/christmas-strolls/>



Ring in the season at Shangri La Gardens! On select evenings in December, stroll through the transformed landscape featuring thousands of Christmas lights, holiday flowering displays and colorful decorations. The festive holiday atmosphere also features dozens of unique Christmas trees decorated by talented members of the community. During Strolls hours, Orange Lions Club will have cookies and hot chocolate available for purchase. Elevate your family experience by participating in our festive weekly themes!

Admission is FREE!

Please consider donating non-perishable food items to Orange Christian Services to support those in greatest need throughout our community. We will be collecting non-perishable food items December 1-21 during normal garden hours and during Christmas Strolls.

During Family Holiday PJ Week (Dec. 5-9), we will also be collecting new pajamas and blankets in support of the Lutch Theater's PJ & Blanket Drive, benefitting Salvation Army- Orange.

VENUE

Enchanted Gardens
6420 Farm to Market 359
Richmond, TX 77406 US +



*John was our speaker at Garden Club this past March

Everything You Need To Know About Planting & Growing Fruit Trees

January 13, 2024 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm



DETAILS

Date:

January 13, 2024

Time:

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

2024 is YOUR year for gardening! Join us to learn all about growing fruit trees in our Gulf Coast region. Local citrus and fruit tree expert, John Panzarella, will be discussing his favorite varieties, how to plant and care for them, and will answer all of your questions. Whether you are new to growing fruit trees or experienced and already enjoying home-grown fruit, you're sure to learn something new and interesting! We will have covered tents with plenty of seating to keep you warm and comfortable while you learn.

Rose Care in the Gulf Coast Region

February 10, 2024 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm



DETAILS

Date:

February 10, 2024

Time:

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

2024 is YOUR year for gardening! If you're interested in starting a rose garden this is the seminar for you! Come learn from Marie Jenkins, Manager of The Antique Rose Emporium, everything you need to know about rose care in our Gulf Coast region and the best varieties to grow here. Our nursery will be fully stocked with all of our spring roses – choose your favorites and take them home with you! We will have covered tents with plenty of seating to keep you warm and comfortable while you learn.

Upcoming Classes

The 2023 Green Thumb Gardening Series lectures have concluded. Below is the 2024 schedule to assist in your gardening plans for the coming year.

Green Thumb 2024 Gardening Series

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Harris County Master Gardeners are pleased to offer the FREE **Green Thumb Gardening Series of Lectures**
Got questions? Go to hcmga.tamu.edu/ask-a-question/

Second Monday, 10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. Houston Community College @Home Gardening Series

Register in advance to receive the link: <https://hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register>

Second Monday of each month

January 8 – <i>Intro to Aquaponics</i>	June 10 – <i>Seed Saving and Starting</i>
February 12 – <i>Success with Spring Vegetables</i>	July 8 – <i>Fall's Best Vegetable Garden</i>
March 18 – <i>Edible Landscaping</i>	August 12 – <i>Growing Bulbs in Texas</i>
April 8 – <i>Gardening in Containers</i>	September 9 – <i>Heirloom and Pass-along Plants</i>
May 13 – <i>Identifying "Good and Bad" Bugs</i>	October 14 – <i>Gardening for Extreme Weather</i>

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Harris County Public Library Facebook Live

No reservation required – facebook.com/harriscountypub/events/

Third Tuesday of each month

January 16 – <i>Intro to Aquaponics</i>	June 18 – <i>Seed Saving and Starting</i>
February 20 – <i>Success with Spring Vegetables</i>	July 16 – <i>Fall's Best Vegetable Garden</i>
March 19 – <i>Edible Landscaping</i>	August 20 – <i>Growing Bulbs in Texas</i>
April 16 – <i>Gardening in Containers</i>	September 17 – <i>Heirloom and Pass-along Plants</i>
May 21 – <i>Identifying "Good and Bad" Bugs</i>	October 15 – <i>Gardening for Extreme Weather</i>

<https://hcc.idloom.events/gardening-series/register>
– facebook.com/harriscountypub/events/

Garden to Kitchen – **ROSEMARY**

As this is the best time of year to plant herbs in Houston, consider planting the old kitchen staple **Rosemary** – it is one of the easiest herbs to incorporate in the kitchen.

The following possible health benefits have been linked to consuming rosemary:

- 1) **Reduced risk of cancer**
- 2) **Immune System Support**
- 3) **Improving memory and concentration**

Read more here:

<https://www.webmd.com/diet/health-benefits-rosemary>

Easy Rosemary Tea

Rosemary tea is a warm & comforting drink that you probably didn't know you needed until now. All you need is two ingredients to make it!

Instructions

Use 1 sprig of rosemary per 2 cups of water. Bring the liquid to a boil over high heat, then lower the heat and let it simmer together for 1 to 5 minutes. The longer you let the tea simmer, the stronger (and more potent) the rosemary



the strained tea warm right away.

<https://detoxinista.com/rosemary-tea/>

Rosemary

HEALTH BENEFITS

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Antispasmodic, Anxiolytic

Main Applications

- Relieving inflammation and spasms
- Improving mood and memory
- Supporting the circulatory system

Supportive Compounds

- Rosmarinic acid
- Polyphenolic diterpenes (mainly carnosic acid and carnosol)
- Terpenes (mainly alpha-pinene, camphor, and cineole)

Medicinal Actions

Rosmarinic acid exerts a relaxant effect on muscles, also helping modulate pain and inflammation signals, whereas **carnosic acid and carnosol** can help decrease anxiety and mild depression. On the other hand, **terpenes** support the circulatory system, and **alpha-pinene, camphor, and cineole** have brain-stimulating properties that may help improve memory.

How to Use Rosemary

- RAW
- DRIED
- INFUSION
- POULTICE
- ESSENTIAL OIL
- TINCTURE
- CAPSULES



Did you know?

Rosemary leaves contain vitamins A and B₆ (pyridoxine), as well as iron, calcium, and potassium, all of which can be obtained in small amounts from **culinary uses**. However, the most effective way of reaping rosemary properties is from **medicinal forms** of consumption, where the bioactive compounds of the herb are concentrated.

Source: herbazest.com - For informational purposes only.

HerbaZest.

flavor will be.

Use a slotted spoon to remove the rosemary and any leaves that might have fallen off, then serve



Creamy Chickpea Pasta With Spinach and Rosemary

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

Kosher salt

¼ cup olive oil

1 (14-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained

2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary, plus more for garnish

½ teaspoon Aleppo pepper, or ¼ to ½ teaspoon red-pepper flakes (optional)

Black pepper

1 large shallot, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 cup heavy cream

1 (6-ounce) bag baby spinach

12 ounces spaghetti or bucatini

½ cup finely grated Parmesan

Lemon wedges, for serving

<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020529-creamy-chickpea-pasta-with-spinach-and-rosemary>



PREPARATION

Step 1

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high.

Step 2

In a wide, deep skillet, heat the oil over medium-high. Add the chickpeas, rosemary and Aleppo pepper, if using. Season generously with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until chickpeas start to caramelize at their edges and pop, 5 to 7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer about half the chickpeas to a bowl. Reserve for garnish.

Step 3

Reduce the heat to medium, add the shallots and garlic to the skillet, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots are softened, about 3 minutes. Add the heavy cream and cook until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. Turn off the heat, stir in the spinach and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Step 4

Add the pasta to the boiling water and reduce the heat to medium. Cook the pasta until a couple minutes short of al dente according to package instructions, about 5 minutes. Do not drain the pasta, but using tongs, transfer the pasta directly from the pot to the spinach and cream sauce. Add 1 cup pasta cooking water and the Parmesan, and cook over medium-high, stirring vigorously with the tongs, until the sauce is thickened and the noodles are al dente, about 2 minutes. Add a splash of pasta water to loosen sauce, if needed.

Step 5

Transfer to bowls, and top with reserved chickpeas, rosemary and black pepper. Serve immediately, with lemon wedges for squeezing on top.



Rosemary Chicken

★★★★★

This rosemary chicken is seared chicken breasts coated in a garlic and herb sauce, then baked to golden brown perfection. An easy dinner option that's sure to get rave reviews and is perfect for a busy weeknight.

Course Main Course

Cuisine American

Prep Time 5 minutes

Cook Time 35 minutes

Total Time 40 minutes

Servings 4

Calories 271kcal

Author Sara Welch

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 teaspoons fresh rosemary leaves minced
- 3 tablespoons butter melted
- 1 1/4 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1/4 cup chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- lemon slices and rosemary sprigs for serving optional
- cooking spray

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Season the chicken breasts generously on both sides with salt and pepper.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large pan over medium high heat. Add the chicken breasts and cook for 3-5 minutes on each side or until browned.
3. Transfer the chicken to a baking dish coated with cooking spray.
4. In a small bowl, mix together the rosemary, butter, garlic, chicken broth and lemon juice. Pour the butter mixture over the chicken.
5. Bake for 25 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Bake time may vary depending on the thickness of your chicken breasts. The chicken is done when it reads at least 165 degrees F on a meat thermometer.
6. Spoon the sauce on the bottom of the baking dish over the chicken, then sprinkle with parsley and serve. Garnish with lemon slices and rosemary sprigs if desired.

Nutrition

Calories: 271kcal | Protein: 30g | Fat: 15g | Saturated Fat: 6g | Cholesterol: 113mg | Sodium: 293mg | Potassium: 536mg | Vitamin A: 305IU | Vitamin C: 5.6mg | Calcium: 18mg | Iron: 0.7mg

<https://www.dinneratthezoo.com/rosemary-chicken/>

Taken from:***Eat Right, Eat Well--The Italian Way***by [Edward Giobbi](#)

This is one of my family favorites – I add sprigs of fresh rosemary from my garden. It has been a go to for using more beans and veggies for dinner when we want less meat. Great for lunch, too.

*yum
yum*

SOUP FLORENTINE STYLE

Zuppa Fiorentina

Serves 6.

- 2 cups fresh shelled cranberry beans (shell beans)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon rosemary
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons safflower oil or vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 cups chicken or beef broth or water
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes, fresh if possible
(drain if canned)
- 2 cups broccoli cut into bite-sized flowerets
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or
1 teaspoon dried
- 1/2 cup rice

Put the beans in a medium saucepan with the garlic, rosemary, salt, and pepper, and cover with water (about 1 inch over the tops of the beans). Cover and boil gently 1 hour.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a medium soup pot and add the onion. When onion browns, add the rest of the ingredients except the rice and cook 30 minutes. Add the cooked beans and their liquid, cover, and boil gently another 30 minutes. Add about 1/2 cup rice and continue to cook until the rice is al dente.

Serve hot, or at room temperature.

Variation: To make the soup looser, cook rice separately. Serve 2 or 3 tablespoons rice in each soup bowl, then ladle soup over rice.

Calories	Cholesterol mg	Protein gm	Carbohydrate gm	Total fat gm	%	Sat fat gm	%	Mono gm	Poly gm
1118	0	41.6	169.6	30.2	24	2.2	2	4.0	19.6



Rosemary & Garlic Dinner Rolls

This is a repeat recipe. It was first included in the September 2022 *In The Garden* newsletter. It was shared by Courtney Fast, and was met with rave reviews reviews!

- * 14 frozen yeast dinner rolls
- * 1/4 c. butter melted
- * 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- * 1 stem fresh rosemary, chopped
- * 1 tsp. flaky sea salt

Instructions

1. Butter large pan
2. Place frozen rolls in pan (or casserole type dish) and cover with a dish cloth to rise for 5-6 hours
3. Mix garlic powder into melted butter and brush onto rolls
4. Sprinkle rolls with rosemary and sea salt
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes, serve immediately- enjoy!

Rosemary Pecans Holly Huber introduced us all to these special pecans at last year's December Garden Club get together. They surprised us all!

For this addictive recipe, pecans are mixed with melted butter, sugar, cayenne, and salt, before roasting. Once toasted, chopped fresh rosemary is tossed into the mix for an earthy, woody finish.

By [Sara Quessenberry](#) | Updated on September 11, 2022

Hands On Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 20 mins

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups pecan halves
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

Directions

Step 1

Heat oven to 375° F. Melt the butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Stir in the sugar, cayenne pepper, and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Add the pecans and toss to coat.

Step 2

Transfer the pecans to a rimmed baking sheet and arrange in a single layer. Bake, stirring occasionally, until toasted, 10 to 12 minutes.

Step 3

1. Add the rosemary and toss to combine. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Nutrition Facts

Per serving: 199 calories; total fat 21g; saturated fat 3g; cholesterol 8mg; sodium 118mg; total carbohydrate 4g; protein 2g



GARDEN CREATIONS

Spruce Up Your Planter for the Holidays

Here is a simple idea on how to add a holiday touch to a planter by your front door. This is from Steph of Contained Creations. She is located in Richmond Virginia, but this design would work here in Houston as well.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/COJfjrPuPev/>

1. Place a well watered table top tree 🌲 directly into your potting mix. These are available at big box stores.



2. Add cut evergreen branches around the edge of the pot. Notice that the ivy stays to add more interest spilling over sides of pot.



Different varieties of spruce add contrasting colors of green



Adding Boxwood or a similar type of greenery adds texture – magnolia would also work well

Next try adding some cedar for a feathery touch and yet another shade of green.



3. Decorate with lights ✨, pine cones, holly and other seasonal embellishments to match your outdoor decor.

You may want to spray your pinecones with clear lacquer (clear acrylic spray) to make sure they do not close.



You will find more ideas for seasonal pots on Contained_Creations on instagram or on the website.

Steph even has an online course you can take!

<https://www.containedcreations.com/winter-container-gardens-1>

***Plant of the Month* – Pineapple Sage**



Crush the leaves of *Salvia elegans* to enjoy a refreshing, fruity aroma, mixed with hints of traditional sage. This fragrance is where the plant gets its common name, pineapple

sage, but the strength of the scent differs depending on your region's climate. This late-blooming, fast-growing shrub is a warm-zone perennial and part of the expansive mint family (Lamiaceae).

Common Name	Pineapple Sage
Botanical Name	<i>Salvia elegans</i>
Family	Lamiaceae
Plant Type	Tender Perennial, Subshrub, Herbaceous
Mature Size	Up to 5 ft. tall, up to 3 ft. wide
Sun Exposure	Full Sun, Partial Shade
Soil Type	Well-drained, Moist
Soil pH	Neutral
Bloom Time	Summer, Fall
Flower Color	Red
Hardiness Zones	8-11 (USDA)
Native Area	Mexico, Guatemala

Its striking dark, bushy foliage works in beds or borders. It's a winning and easy-to-establish herb garden addition (the leaves and flowers are edible), and hummingbirds love the late-blooming, drooping scarlet flowers.

Pineapple sage grows well in large containers on patios. Grown in pots it can be moved to shade or partial shade in the heat of the summer. It can tolerate cool temperatures - down to around 20 degrees

Fahrenheit. Although this plant has some drought tolerance, the foliage starts to wilt and curl up if your plant is too dry. Even moisture throughout the growing season ensures healthy foliage and prevents leaf drop.

This time of year it can be found in some of the local nurseries like Buchanan's, Arbor Gate or enchanted gardens. Best to call to double check if it is in stock. It can also often be purchased online. Flowers and leaves are edible.

The Good the Bad and the Ugly – *insects in the garden* -

from Harris County Master Gardeners' October newsletter Urban Dirt

<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/2023-urban-dirt-newsletter/october-2023/>

'BUG' OF THE MONTH

Southern Pine Bark Beetle

Article by Debra Caldwell, Advanced Master Gardener: Entomology

The severe drought and high heat we experienced this summer stressed many trees and made them susceptible to insects. The Southern Pine Bark Beetle (SPB) *Dendroctonus frontalis* is one insect that takes advantage of weakened trees. Three species of engraver beetles (the six spined ips, *Ips calligraphus*, eastern fives pined ips, *Ips grandicollis*, and small southern pine engraver, *Ips avulsus* may cause similar symptoms. For a comprehensive guide to Wood Boring Insects go to the Texas AgriLife extension fact sheet: <https://extensionentomology.tamu.edu/publications/wood-boring-insects-of-trees-and-shrubs/>

How do you know if a Southern Pine Bark Beetle is 'bugging' your pine tree? You may notice small holes in the bark and reddish-brown dust at the base of the tree or in crevices in the bark. Trees may ooze sap and the needles turn yellow or reddish brown as the trees dry from lack of water reaching them. White pitch tubes that look like pieces of popcorn may form at the entrance hole. The key characteristic of an infestation by southern pine bark beetles is S-shaped tunnels under the bark.



Photo by Ronald F. Billings, Texas Forest Service

Adult southern pine bark beetles are about the size of a grain of rice at 1/8 inch long. The chunky little beetles are dark brown to black in color. Beetles emerge from an infested tree, fly to another tree and burrow into the bark where they create their typical S-shaped tunnels. They seem to like company because they release pheromones that attract other southern pine bark beetles.

Soon, the hoard of beetles overwhelms the tree's ability to resist the infestation and it succumbs. <https://texasinsects.tamu.edu/southern-pine-bark-beetle/>



Southern Pine Bark Beetle

Photo by Erich G. Vallery, USDA Forest Service - SRS-4552, Bugwood.org licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License

The beetles have a holometabolous life cycle (egg, larva, pupa, adult). Females lay eggs in the tunnels which hatch into white grubs (larvae) with a reddish-brown head. Over a period of two to six weeks, the larvae go through several instar stages until they pupate. In Texas, the beetles can produce seven to nine generations in one year!

The damage caused by beetles tunneling under the bark disrupts the flow of nutrients through the vascular tissues of the tree and usually kills the tree in two to four months. Sadly, once the tree is infested, spraying is usually ineffective. The tree should be removed. Insecticides are sometimes used to prevent infestation of surrounding trees.

Before taking any action, you want to correctly identify the problem with a tree and if there is a pest, you want to accurately identify it. You may want to contact an arborist to help in identifying the species of pests and recommend the next steps. You can find a certified arborist near you by using "Find an Arborist" on the Trees Are Good website. <http://www.treesaregood.org/>

What can you do to protect your pines from pests? Keep them healthy by mulching and watering in extremely dry weather. Dense stands of trees are more susceptible to infestation so thinning a group of trees may also help protect them.

These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

Linda Manthos explains about her favorite garden tool in the garden... a Christmas gift idea?...



This garden triangle hoe is my very favorite gardening tool. It does everything I could ask for – weeding, digging trenches for planting seeds, cutting small roots – anything to do with gardening! This tool helped me clear about a fourth of my backyard of dreaded *basket grass*. I use it so often that I keep two on hand in case one breaks. If I am busy in the garden and ask my husband to bring me my favorite tool, he knows exactly what I mean – and I have a bunch of tools.

I couldn't garden without it!

FOXSMZZ Garden Triangle Hoe Japanese Weeding

https://www.amazon.com/FOXSMZZ-Garden-Triangle-Japanese-Weeding/dp/B089WCHZSJ/ref=sr_1_10?crid=31KT44ISWJQK3&keywords=triangle+hoe+garden+tool&qid=1701282469&srefix=Triangle+hoe%2Caps%2C416&sr=8-10

Some Videos of Note for December:

Cyclamen Care

<https://buchanansplants.com/container-gardens/cyclamen-care/>

Poinsetta Care

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=873482457010416>

How to Care for Christmas Cactus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=QQzB47ac2LM>

Best Edibles for Shade

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWj8XVmp45o>

Plant Blueberries NOW

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTxwVzwkTWU>

Some Articles of Note for This Season:

5 Simple tips for Forcing Paperwhites

<https://www.vintagehomedesigns.com/5-simple-tips-for-forcing-paperwhites-to-enjoy-at-christmas/>

Say Happy Holidays with Amaryllis

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/gardening/article/Say-happy-holidays-with-amaryllis-15754972.php>

Caring for Your Rosemary Tree

by Angela Chandler
Harris County Master Gardener

Rosemary is a popular herb used in cooking, but even if you never use a sprig of it on lamb or chicken, rosemary is a wonderful addition to any garden. This Mediterranean favorite is fragrant, hardy, and pest- and disease-free. Plant it where you can occasionally run your fingers through it to enjoy its wonderful scent.

Rosemary can be used as a specimen plant, a feature in the herb garden, or an informal hedge. Rosemary is a good companion to other perennials, including roses and salvias. There are numerous varieties of rosemary: some are upright; others are prostrate or trailing; several are known for their lovely pale blue blossoms.

Rosemary “trees” or topiaries have become a popular holiday gift or decoration in recent years. These trees can be kept for many years with minimal attention and care.

Usually, a nursery-grown rosemary tree is a large plant in a relatively small container when it is purchased. Since rosemary sends out lots of tiny hair-like roots, there is probably a pretty good size root mass in the container without much soil to absorb water.

Although rosemary is known to be drought tolerant, it does need sufficient moisture in order to thrive. Rosemary does not exhibit the usual signs of water-stress seen in other plants. A rosemary plant can easily be past salvaging before the signs of inadequate watering are noticed. Pay close attention to the watering needs of your plant until you have time to repot it or plant it in a garden bed.

If at all possible, replant your tree into a larger pot as soon as possible. Select a pot that is two to four inches wider and deeper than the original container. Use a lightweight, fast-draining potting mix, and plant your new rosemary so that the top of the root ball is at the same level as the surrounding potting mix. Water the plant thoroughly every week.

If you are keeping your plant in the house for the holidays, make sure you have a tray underneath the container to catch water that drains out. Keep the container near a bright window and do not expose it to the drying heat of heaters or air registers.

You can plant your rosemary tree outside in full sun either immediately after you receive it or after the holidays. Saturate the plant completely before planting to reduce transplant stress. Prepare a hole in a sunny location and in well-drained soil. Water the plant well and apply mulch after planting.



If you must keep the rosemary in its nursery container for a while, make sure you monitor the soil moisture. You may need to apply water more often than once a week until you have time to repot or plant it. Check the moisture of the root ball by sticking your index finger an inch below soil level. If the soil is dry, it is time to water, but do not allow the plant to sit in water.

PLANTING TIME!

December

Transplant Veggies	Seeds - Direct Sow	Transplant Herbs
asparagus crowns	arugula	chives
broccoli	beets	cilantro
cabbage	carrots	dill
cauliflower	lettuce	lavender
celery	mizuna	lemon balm
collards	radish	mint
garlic clove	snap peas	oregano
kale	spinach	parsley
kohlrabi	turnips	rosemary
lettuce*		sage
mustard		thyme
onion bulb (sets)		
multiplier onion		
swiss chard		



	Vegetable Garden Planting Dates for Harris County												FACT SHEET <small>Texas AgriLife Extension Service 3033 Bear Creek Dr, Houston, TX 77084 281.855.5600 • http://harris-bx.tamu.edu</small>
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
ASPARAGUS, Crowns													
BEANS, Lima & Snap Bush													
BEANS, Lima & Snap Pole													
BEETS													
BROCCOLI, Plants													
CABBAGE, Plants													
CAULIFLOWER, Plants													
CARROTS													
CHARD, Swiss													
CHINESE CABBAGE													
COLLARDS													
CORN													
CUCUMBER													
EGGPLANTS, Plants													
KOHLRABI, Plants													
LETTUCE													
MUSKMELON, Cantalope													
MUSTARD													
OKRA													
ONION, Bulb-type setes													
ONION, Transplant for scallions													
ONION, Multipliers													
PARSLEY													
PEAS, English & Snap													
PEAS, Southern													
PEPPER, Plants													
POTATO, Irish													
POTATO, Sweet													
PUMPKIN													
RADISH													
SPINACH													
SQUASH, Summer													
SQUASH, Winter													
TOMATO, Plants													
TURNIP													
WATERMELON													

On a Lighter Note

