

Farmer Fred - January Garden Chores for the Central Valley, Foothills & Bay Area

🐛 Wait until next month before pruning any perennials, shrubs or trees that were injured during December's freezing mornings. If it gets really cold again, those open wounds may invite further disaster.

🐛 Be sure to rake up and discard all the fallen leaves around your rose bushes, which may be harboring next season's pest problems.

🐛 Plan on spraying your deciduous fruit trees again this month. This will help control peach leaf curl. Your local nursery person can direct you to the right shelf for the product that's intended for your particular fruit tree variety.

🐛 Clean and sharpen all your pruning tools when you're done. Don't put them away wet and dirty, which can encourage the formation of rust.

🐛 Think about what you want in your summer garden, then hit the catalogs or seed racks at your local nursery.

🐛 If crabgrass is a problem in your yard, control it now with a preemergent, before it germinates next month.

🐛 Winter-flowering plants need a feeding with a balanced fertilizer to keep blooming in these cold months. Among those that should be fed: primroses, stock, calendula, snapdragons, iceland poppies, pansies and violas.

🐛 Bare root plants are available at nurseries now. Choose from a wide assortment of fruit trees, roses, grapes and berries.

🐛 Artichokes and gladiolus can be planted this month. Plant a few gladiolas every three weeks until July for a continuous bloom from spring until fall.

🐛 Camellias at the nurseries will be in bloom now; choose one that catches your eye.

🐛 Start tomato and pepper seeds indoors in small containers or peat pots, either on a sunny window sill or beneath fluorescent lights.

🐛 Now is the good time for pruning deciduous fruit trees, grapes and roses. If you're unsure how to proceed, check with your favorite nursery person. Two good books on the subject include Ortho's "All About Pruning" and Sunset's "Pruning Handbook".

- 🐛 When selecting bare root roses, look for those with a grade number of one. These are the healthiest roses available.
- 🐛 Perennials that can be divided now include shasta daisies and day lilies.
- 🐛 Plan on spraying your deciduous fruit trees one more time before Valentine's Day. A copper-based spray will help control peach leaf curl and brown rot.
- 🐛 Apply a dormant oil spray on your roses and deciduous fruit trees now. This will suffocate spring and summer pests, including scale.
- 🐛 Pre-emergents, applied now to your lawn, can help stop the summertime onslaught of crabgrass.
- 🐛 When planting bare root fruit trees, make sure they will be in an area with good drainage.
- 🐛 Add a splash of winter color to your porch or patio. Pot up transplants of primrose, cyclamen, pansy and calendula, now appearing at area nurseries.