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[www.thehillcountrygardener.com](http://www.thehillcountrygardener.com)

### **Birds and Wildlife**

- There are still some hummingbirds around, so keep your feeders in place.

### **Color**

- Continue to care for winter annuals.
- There is still time to transplant pansies, dianthus, stocks, calendulas and other cool-season annual flowers.
- Bluebonnets will have an active growth spurt in February and March.
- Bougainvilleas will bloom all winter if they are in a greenhouse.
- Many tulips, daffodils, paperwhites and other spring bulbs emerge and bloom this month.
- If the weather is warm, watch for aphids.
- Spring-blooming, pre-chilled bulbs can still be planted if done early in the month. Just remember that tulips are considered annuals in south Texas.
- Be sure to maintain moisture in house plants. Do not place houseplants near a heat source or in a bright-sun window.
- Repot Christmas cactus in a peat moss- or pine bark-based medium. Keep the soil moist.

### **Fruits and Nuts**

- Apply dormant oil to control scale and other insects on fruit trees. Follow the instructions on the label.
- Bare-root and containerized fruit trees, blackberries and grapes should be selected and planted as soon as possible so they will be well established before spring growth begins.

### **Ornamentals**

- Don't prune blooms on early-blooming plants like mountain laurel, flowering peach, ornamental cherry, climbing roses, althea, etc.

- Keep your living Christmas tree well watered (once per week).

### **Shade Trees and Shrubs**

- If you must prune oak trees, January is a good month to do it.
- Prune deciduous trees now while you can see damaged or rubbing limbs, misshaped parts, etc. Do NOT top the trees.
- This is an excellent time to plant new shrubs and trees.
- Should you need to transplant established trees and shrubs, do so now while they are still dormant and will have sufficient time to re-establish a root system before spring growth begins.

### **Turf Grass**

- If you don't receive an inch of rain, water the lawn, ½ inch every 2-3 weeks.
- It's a good time to aerate with the plug-cutter type and then top dress with a half-inch of compost.
- Don't fertilize or use weed-and-feed products.
- Gradually build up low spots in the lawn with ½-1 inch of compost, sand, or top-dressing.
- You could still overseed with Elbon rye grass, but it may or may not do well.

### **Vegetables**

- If you pluck or cut individual leaves from lettuce or spinach, they will continue to produce.
- Harvest broccoli heads before the flowers open.
- String-mow your Elbon rye and vetch and till it into the garden at the end of January.
- By the end of the month, thin onions you planted in October so that plants are 6-8 inches apart.
- Side dress actively growing vegetables.