

Gardener's Corner December 2023

As the holidays approach and we get increasingly busy, it is easy to overlook gardening tasks. This is true both for plants you have brought in from outdoors and those new plants received as gifts. (Think of those poinsettias and amaryllis—more about those later).

Several of the **Missouri Botanical Garden's (MBG)** tips and tasks for the month of December are focused on indoor plants. In the winter, plants need less water. Two good tips are to use tepid water rather than cold, and to keep the plants back away from windows so that cold temperatures don't impact them. Remember to protect any new indoor plants you buy when traveling home. You can use a cardboard box or plastic bag to transport them safely.

Speaking of indoor plants, keeping them healthy over the winter can take some work. There is a short article entitled *Managing insects on indoor plants* on the University of Minnesota Extension's (**UMNExt**) website that might help you maintain healthy indoor plants during the cold weather. You can find it at: <https://extension.umn.edu/product-and-houseplant-pests/insects-indoor-plants>.

In mid-November, the **USDA** put out a new *Plant Hardiness Zone map*. It is worth learning more about the changes. The map and information on how it was created can be found at this site: <https://www.ars.usda.gov/news-events/news/research-news/2023/usda-unveils-updated-plant-hardiness-zone-map/>

Amaryllis, with their colorful blooms, are a great gift for the holidays. The care and feeding of these beautiful plants can be found in an article from the University of **Illinois Extension (UIExt)**. Entitled *Colorful Amaryllis Brighten Your Colorless Winter Days*, you can find this helpful information here: <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/ilriverhort/2022-12-15-colorful-amaryllis-brighten-your-colorless-winter-days>

And while we're on the subject of beautiful winter indoor plants, did you know that Congress has declared December 12th as National Poinsettia Day? You can find some very interesting historical information about the *History of Poinsettia* at the **UI Ext** site, <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/prairies-perennials/2020-12-14-history-poinsettia>

Don't forget about **MU Extension's Garden Spade**. In addition to gardening information, the November edition has brief articles about cranberries and the difference between sweet potatoes and yams. Check it out at: https://i.emlfiles4.com/cmpdoc/9/4/0/0/9/1/files/22376_november-2023-garden-spade-newsletter.pdf?utm_campaign=997402_November%202023%20Garden%20Spade&utm_medium=email&utm_source=email&dm_i=42N5,LDLM,4SVDF6,2FBF2,1

Some programs of interest in December include the following:

December 6, 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. **Kansas State** Garden hour hosts a presentation on Beekeeping Basics—How to Start Your Own Colony. You can register here: https://ksu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IXIjvtedRu-pvfFA6Kzvxw#/registration

December 7, 10 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Tree Saps and Syrup, presented by **Seed St. Louis** through the **St. Louis County Library**. You'll learn what trees to tap, the equipment you will need and other details about tapping trees. You can register here: <https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=339258>