

Winter in the Garden

by Noni Young

Winter doesn't have to be the season of indoors and inactivity. Just because the weather may be grey and gloomy, there are still a number of activities for the garden in winter that can get your blood pumping.

Planning ahead

Many plants go dormant over winter as the nights get longer and the months become colder. The deciduous plants have lost their leaves and there is minimal growth in the garden. This is a great time to implement changes you would like in the garden, such as transplanting. Making these changes now will have less impact on the garden and won't impede your use of the space for the summer months.

It's also an excellent time to tackle projects such as decking, paving, and pergolas. During the winter months landscapers and handymen are in less demand. This means you have more trades to choose from and shorter wait times for the job to be done.

Winter Pruning

Winter is the season for pruning. Plants are pruned for a number of reasons. It may be to promote bushier growth or flowering and fruiting. It may be to control pests and diseases. Or it may be to maintain size, shape and form. Whatever the reason, some simple rules to follow when pruning:

- Prune from mid to late winter. If you prune too early the subsequent new growth may get damaged by the cold weather or frosts.
- Prune plants by no more than one third. If you are wanting to encourage bushy growth a tip

prune (approximately 10cm) will give the best results.

- Use clean, sharp tools to prune and avoid pruning spring flower buds.

Winter Colour



Nurseries are full of annual seedlings that can provide colour in the garden at this time of the year. Consider potting up some cinerarias, pansies, violas, primulas, stocks or poppies. The brighter the colour the better. For more permanent winter colour go for Winter Roses (*Helleborus orientalis*) or Clivias. Winter is also the season for Cymbidium Orchids. Despite their reputation, orchids are quite easy to grow and their flowers spikes seem to last forever.

Winter Vegies

The winter veggie patch should be filled to the brim with the brassica family: cabbages, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels Sprouts. Other winter vegies include root crops (beetroot, carrots and parsnips) and legumes (peas and broad beans). It's also time to get the garlic in the ground.



What could be better than spending some time in the garden tending the veggie patch, harvesting your crop and cooking up a winter warming soup or stew with your own produce!

Noni Young, qualified horticulturalist
and garden designer
Visit www.noniyoung.com.au.