

Monthly Tips (Zone 7, Piedmont Triad area of NC)

JANUARY

- Prune woody plants while dormant, including fruit trees, summer-blooming shrubs & vines. Select the strongest & most vigorous branches to remain. Prune out diseased & weak branches.
- Fertilize acid-loving plants (Azalea, Rhododendron, Camellia, Holly, etc.). Follow label instructions.
- Add a handful of lime to Crape Myrtles to prevent powdery mildew
- Check winter mulch in beds & around trees. Replenish to 3" to 4" deep.
- Prune berry bushes to encourage new growth & fruit production.
- Deadhead pansies to encourage blooming.
- After a winter storm, gently shake snow from evergreen branches & let icy covering melt naturally.
- Can use leftover Christmas trees & wreaths as mulch (just cut off the branches & lay over beds), or leave intact & place where birds can use for protection.
- Continue to water plant material if no significant rainfall, especially newly installed plants.
- Cut back any remaining perennials.
- Continue blowing leaves from bed areas.
- Remember our feathered friends in this cold month....keep out food & plenty of fresh water.
- Still a great time to plant B&B trees & shrubs, just remember to mulch well & water in thoroughly until established.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a minimum depth of 3" to 4" for cold weather protection.
- It's a good time to take stock of your landscape equipment in preparation for the spring. Note which tools need maintenance or replacing & what new tools need to be purchased.
- For icy patches avoid salt on walks & driveways near plant beds. It will damage the plant material. Sand or fireplace ash works as a good substitute.
- Can use dormant oil spray on trunks & branches of fruit trees to kill overwintering adult insects & their eggs. Follow label instructions.
- Spray evergreens to control lace bugs, spider mites, scale & whiteflies. Follow label instructions.
- Begin to work compost & lime into vegetable bed areas, in preparation for sowing seeds.
- This is a great month for a landscape design! Go ahead & get your thoughts on paper so you can hit the garden centers when spring arrives!

FEBRUARY

- Cut back Liriope & other perennials to stimulate spring growth
- Continue to plant B&B trees & shrubs
- Can continue to prune dormant trees & shrubs, but it's getting too late to continue pruning spring bloomers.

- Continue preparation of landscape equipment; sharpen blades, clean & oil tools, replenish used stock, replace worn out tools, etc.
- Continue feeding & providing clean water for the birds.
- Continue leaf removal.
- Continue to replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4" .
- Continue to water plant material if no significant rainfall, especially newly installed plants.
- Open & ventilate cold frames if temperature is above 45 degrees.
- Prune berry bushes to encourage new growth & fruit production.
- At the end of this month (approximately when Forsythia is in bloom), apply crabgrass preventer with fertilizer to lawn.
- Great time to start planning for spring installation. Call Earth Graphics for a landscape design to beat the spring rush!

MARCH

- Fertilize established trees & shrubs with 10-10-10 or a high nitrogen fertilizer (except for Azaleas, Rhododendron & Camellias)
- Apply pre-emergent crabgrass preventer (early in month).
- Apply super phosphate (0-20-0) to Azaleas to encourage blooming (early in month).
- Continue to plant trees, shrubs & groundcovers.
- Continue to water plant material if no significant rainfall, especially newly installed plants.
- Tools & equipment should be ready to go by now, especially lawn equipment!
- Continue to prune tree & shrubs branches that are winter damaged, diseased, weak, or dead.
- Finish up any dormant pruning, especially before warm days start to linger.
- Fertilize Iris, Peony & Clematis with bone meal or a low strength fertilizer (like 5-10-5).
- Add organic fertilizer & Black Kow to Rose beds & Wisteria Vines.
- Remove any winter debris or leaves from lawn, de-thatch & aerate.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4" .
- Can begin to dig & divide summer & fall blooming perennials & ornamental grasses.
- Begin hand weeding in bed areas. Daytime temperatures will need to be warm to begin spraying herbicides.
- Prune Tea & Shrub Roses severely to force healthy new growth.
- Begin spraying Roses with fungicide to prevent black spot. Follow label instructions.
- Wait to prune spring flowering shrubs (like Forsythia) until after they've finished blooming.

- Plant cool season annuals, like Alyssum, Snapdragon, Viola, Calendula, etc.
- When soil has dried out, plant summer bulbs like Dahlias, Cannas & Gladiolas, etc.
- Fertilize cool season lawns early in month with slow release nitrogen fertilizer. Do not apply after March 15th.
- If you need to begin mowing, remember to set your blades high, to cut at 3" or higher (to prevent brown spot).
- Landscape Designers get busy this time of year. Call early to get on their schedules.

APRIL

- April 15th is typically considered the 'last frost' date for our area. It's okay to plant annuals now, just protect new plantings from cold nighttime temperatures.
- Begin mowing routine. Be sure to cut fescue at 3" or higher to prevent brown out.
- Mid April apply Milorganite to lawn, and as an option... crabgrass preventer without fertilizer.
- Can apply a weed & feed to lawns after weeds have appeared.
- Seed or sod new lawns.
- Define bed & turf edges.
- Divide perennials & groundcovers as needed.
- Finish heavy pruning of Shrub Roses.
- Plant container or box Roses now.
- As daytime temperatures warm up, start spraying herbicides as needed. Follow label instructions.
- Spray Azalea, Rhododendron, Pieris & Pyracantha, if signs of lace bugs (follow label instructions).
- Fertilize blooming bulbs.
- As bulbs finish blooming, divide & transplant.
- Great time to transplant trees & shrubs. Continue planting new trees & shrubs.
- Start planting your perennials now.
- Remember to water newly installed plant material & lawns, evenly & thoroughly (if no significant rainfall). Lawns need at least 1" of water weekly and plant material need a thorough watering until established.
- Keep in mind that it's best to plant when the soil is fairly dry. If you must plant when soil is wet, use dry peat moss as an amendment to absorb excess moisture.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4".
- Continue to prune any dead, broken or diseased branches from trees & shrubs, but consider each plant variety before heavy pruning this time of year. Some plants require pruning before blooming or leafing out and some require pruning after they finish blooming or leafing out.
- Keep in mind when planting...great bed prep leads to great plants!
- Service irrigation systems.

- As days get warmer, start feeding pond fish.
- Thinking about any hardscapes plans (like decks, patios, fire pits, screen porches, etc.)? Call Earth Graphics now so we can create a design for summer installation.

MAY

- It's time for some color....plant your annuals & tropicals now!
- Plant your container gardens now, just remember to water more frequently (especially in warm, dry weather) since roots are above ground & can dry out quicker than if planted in beds.
- Start fertilizing annuals every 10 days to 2 weeks, especially heavy bloomers.
- Should be able to transplant any annuals started indoors, just pay attention to cold nighttime temperatures.
- Prune spring shrubs that have finished blooming.
- As spring bulbs die out, fertilize once more with bone meal & let green foliage die back naturally, as it supplies nutrients back to the bulb.
- Can still apply weed control to lawns while days are still cooler. Do not apply once warm weather stays.
- Start Rose maintenance routine of spraying, watering, feeding & deadheading.
- Dig & divide early spring perennials, only if they have finished flowering.
- Can start 'pinching back' Chrysanthemum blooms now (through the first of July) to encourage fall blooms.
- Continue to monitor plant material for insects & disease damage. Treat as needed, following label instructions.
- Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall).
- Plant summer blooming bulbs.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4". This helps the soil retain moisture during dry weather.
- Okay to put out tropical water plants this month.
- Train & trim espaliers & topiaries. Check ties that may be strangling branches & loosen.
- Continue to edge bed & turf areas.
- Continue to spot spray lawn for weeds with appropriate herbicide. Follow label instructions.
- Set stakes for tall perennials.
- Continue to provide food & water for the birds.
- Hummingbirds should be back now. Keep them happy with a simple sugar solution (1 part dissolved sugar to 4 parts water). Change the solution frequently if the hummingbirds aren't draining the feeder, especially if it's in direct sun. The solution can spoil & become toxic to these amazing little creatures.
- Can sow warm season vegetables & herbs.

- When applying fertilizer to trees & shrubs, be careful to place around the perimeter of plant, not near the base or trunk.
- Now that the landscape has flushed out, this is a great time to consider any areas in your landscape that aren't performing like they should or trouble spots. Call us for a re-design of your existing landscape. We can help spruce up those areas with creative planning!

JUNE

- Continue to spray weeds in bed areas as necessary. If hand-weeding, it is easier when the soil is damp. Try to get to weeds before they seed...if not your weed problems will multiply!
- Can prune evergreen shrubs & blooming shrubs (if flowering has stopped).
- Continue Rose care routine, spraying, feeding, pruning & deadheading. This is the month to enjoy your Roses!
- Prune Climbing Roses after blooming. Cut out diseased & dead canes, leaving three or four vigorous canes.
- Do not prune summer or fall blooming shrubs now or buds may be lost.
- Remove dead & diseased wood & water sprouts from Dogwood.
- If you notice Japanese beetles, hang traps and/or spray with Sevin (liquid or dust). Remember to re-apply Sevin after watering or any rainfall. Follow label instructions.
- Add super phosphate to soil around Rhododendron to promote blooms for next year.
- Stake tall perennials & train trailing vines.
- Continue to fertilize annuals every 7 to 10 days with liquid fertilizer.
- Deadhead annuals & perennials for fuller plants & additional blooming. Cut flowers to enjoy...the more you cut, the more you will have. If you don't let them set seed, they will continue to produce new blooms.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4". This helps the soil retain moisture during dry weather.
- Continue to monitor plant material for insects & disease damage. Treat as needed, following label instructions.
- Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall). The best time to water is first thing in the morning, the plant makes best use of the water at this time of day. Also, it helps prevent rot & fungus.
- Continue to edge bed & turf areas.
- Continue mowing routine. Be sure to cut fescue at 3" or higher to prevent brown out.
- Continue to spot spray lawn for weeds with appropriate herbicide. Follow label instructions.
- Continue to provide food & water for our feathered friends. Remember to keep hummingbird solution fresh.
- Can continue to plant trees & shrubs this month, if an irrigation system exists or if you are a conscientious water-er!

- Continue to pinch back Chrysanthemums & Asters for fall blooms.
- Add to & turn compost pile. Remember to keep diseased plant material out of compost piles.
- Pinch back annual herbs & thin Basil.
- Place netting over fruit trees to protect from birds.
- Shear hedges after their first flush of growth. To maintain thick growth at the base, be sure that the hedge is wider at the bottom than it is at the top. Otherwise, the lower branches will grow thin in the shade of the ones above.
- Remember to start planning for fall. Fall is the best time for planting trees & shrubs, so call us now for a fall planting plan!

JULY

- Prune late blooming Azalea & Rhododendron, only if they have finished blooming.
- Continue to weed in bed areas either by spraying or by hand, as necessary. If hand-weeding, it is easier when the soil is damp. Try to get to weeds before they seed...if not your weed problems will multiply!
- Continue Rose care routine, spraying, feeding, pruning & deadheading. Stop & smell the Roses!
- Remember to remove all Rose leaves that have fallen to the ground below the Roses. They can carry & spread fungus.
- Tip-prune deciduous & evergreen shrubs to shape. Now is not the time for heavy pruning.
- Continue to fertilize annuals every 7 to 10 days with liquid fertilizer.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4". This helps the soil retain moisture during dry weather.
- Once Iris have browned & died back, they can be divided & transplanted. If not dividing and/or transplanting your Iris, just cut the blades back (the shape of a fan looks nice!). Add bone meal when transplanting.
- Continue to monitor plant material for insects & disease damage. Treat as needed, following label instructions.
- Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall). The best time to water is first thing in the morning, the plant makes best use of the water at this time of day. Also, it helps prevent rot & fungus.
- Continue to edge bed & turf areas.
- Continue mowing routine. Be sure to cut fescue at 3" or higher to prevent brown out.
- Continue to spot spray lawn for weeds with appropriate herbicide. Follow label instructions.
- Continue to deadhead annuals & perennials, especially Buddlea/Butterfly Bush to encourage additional blooming.
- Cut back or stake any leggy perennials.
- Cut back any perennials that are 'browning out'.
- Dig & divide overcrowded perennials.

- Continue to provide food & water for our feathered friends. Remember to keep hummingbird solution fresh.
- After the Fourth of July, stop pinching back Chrysanthemum & Aster. They need to set fall blooms now.
- If slugs & snails are a problem in moist areas, put out slug bait (according to label directions) or beer in a pie plate works well too!
- Continue to plant trees & shrubs this month, if an irrigation system exists or if you are a conscientious water-er!
- Remember your landscape while you're away on vacation this summer. Set timers on irrigation systems or have someone water while you're gone, especially container gardens in full sun. What a nice welcome home....flourishing plants & a green lawn!
- Interested in a specialty garden? Our designers can create many special elements in your landscape, like bird or butterfly gardens, fire pit/conversation areas, kid's play area....any & many kinds of outdoor 'living' spaces!

AUGUST

- Don't be tempted to pinch Chrysanthemum blooms now....wait for their beautiful fall foliage! But do fertilize them weekly, until buds start to show.
- Plant fall blooming bulbs.
- Prune overgrown shrubs.
- Continue to weed in bed areas either by spraying or by hand, as necessary. If hand-weeding, it is easier when the soil is damp. Try to get to weeds before they seed...if not your problem will multiply!
- Continue Rose care routine, spraying, feeding, pruning & deadheading.
- Continue to fertilize annuals, but cut back to every 14 days to once a month with liquid fertilizer.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4". This helps the soil retain moisture during dry weather.
- Continue to monitor plant material for insects & disease damage. Treat as needed, following label instructions.
- Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall). The best time to water is first thing in the morning, the plant makes best use of the water at this time of day. Also, it helps prevent rot & fungus.
- Continue to edge bed & turf areas.
- Continue mowing routine. Be sure to cut fescue at 3" or higher to prevent brown out.
- Continue to spot spray lawn for weeds with appropriate herbicide. Follow label instructions.
- Continue to deadhead annuals & perennials, especially Buddlea/Butterfly Bush to encourage additional blooming. Go ahead & pull up any old, weak or dead annuals.
- Continue to provide food & water for our feathered friends. Remember to keep hummingbird solution fresh. Put up hummingbird feeders at the end of the

month. This will help encourage hummingbirds to go on & head south for winter!

- This is a great month to de-thatch and/or aerate your lawn for a jump start on fall lawn maintenance.
- Continue to monitor plant material for insects & disease damage. Treat as needed, following label instructions.
- Continue to plant trees & shrubs this month, if an irrigation system exists or if you are a conscientious water-er! The best time to plant trees & shrubs is in the fall when days are warm, the nights are cool & rainfall is typically good. So, you might want to wait a month or two instead of planting this month, especially if you are still vacationing.
- Remember to dump any standing water to prevent breeding mosquitoes.
- Prune Wisteria for the last time.
- Prune water sprouts from fruit trees.
- Train & trim espaliers & topiaries for the last time.
- Check plant ties that may be strangling branches.
- Continue to add to & turn compost pile. Remember to use only healthy plant cuttings in compost pile.
- Let Earth Graphics help you with proper planning for your winter garden or landscape.

SEPTEMBER

- This is the best time of year for planting B&B trees & shrubs, container trees & shrubs, some perennials & fall annuals. For most perennials & ornamental grasses, wait to plant in spring.
- Keep in mind when planting...great bed prep leads to great plants!
- Plant early spring blooming bulbs. Wait for first frost or colder day temperatures for planting late spring blooming bulbs.
- Deadhead Chrysanthemum blooms as they fade, this will encourage additional blooms!
- If day time temperatures are cooler, it's okay to plant Pansies. Pansies are cool weather annuals & do not perform well in hot weather. So, if day temperatures are still warm, wait before planting.
- Under-plant Pansies with Daffodils or Tulips for a brilliant color display in spring.
- Replace bloomed out annuals in containers with Pansies & bulbs.
- Continue to fertilize annuals, but cut back to every 14 days to once a month with liquid fertilizer.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a depth of 3" to 4". This helps the soil retain moisture during dry weather.
- Continue to monitor plant material for insects & disease damage. Treat as needed, following label instructions.
- Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall).
- Continue to edge bed & turf areas.

- Continue mowing routine. Be sure to cut fescue at 3" or higher to prevent brown out.
- Continue to spot spray lawn for weeds with appropriate herbicide. Follow label instructions.
- Continue to deadhead annuals & perennials. Pull up any old, weak or dead annuals.
- Continue to weed in bed areas either by spraying or by hand, as necessary. If hand-weeding, it is easier when the soil is damp. Try to get to weeds before they seed...if not your weed problems will multiply!
- Rose care routine will wind down this month....continue to deadhead blooms & remove any fallen leaves on ground at base of Roses. Fertilize Roses for the last time to allow new growth to harden off before first frost.
- Prune trees & shrubs to shape & to remove dead or damaged branches.
- Get your leaf blowers ready! Trees will begin to de-foliate this month. Cover fish ponds with bird netting to keep falling leaves from getting into the water.
- Continue to monitor plant material for insects & disease damage. Treat as needed, following label instructions.
- Start your lawn maintenance routine. You will need about 5# to 8# of grass seed per 1000 square feet of turf area, starter fertilizer & lime (only if required). Aerate first and then apply seed & amendments (order is not important). Keep grass seed damp, sprinkle every day if necessary.
- After aerating & seeding your lawn, fertilize once a month through winter. Tip to remember: start in September, then Halloween, Thanksgiving & Christmas.
- To cut cost on renting an aerator, ask neighbors to share cost or hire a contractor that will give a 'two-for' deal.
- Don't know if you need lime or not? Get a soil test kit....extension agencies & garden centers should have kits for you to prepare & send off for analysis.
- Get houseplants & tropicals ready to bring indoors...check for insects and/or disease & treat (follow label directions), prune & trim any dead or weak foliage, deadhead blooms, & water thoroughly. Stop fertilizing during winter or dilute to half strength. Wait until spring to repot houseplants.
- Add milky spore to lawns to kill Japanese beetle grubs over-wintering in the soil.
- Fertilize Peonies with bone meal.
- For those with fish ponds, cut back on feeding fish as days get colder. Discontinue feeding altogether during winter months.
- Remember our feathered friends....put out plenty of birdseed & plenty of fresh water.
- Planning to build a house or renovate your existing house? We can help with site & spacial planning. Give us a call.

OCTOBER

- Continue planting B&B & container trees & shrubs. Also, a great time to transplant any trees & shrubs.
- Start cleaning up perennial beds before winter...deadhead blooms, prune to shape or cut back dead foliage, & mulch to a depth of 3" to 4".
- Plant Pansies & other cool weather annuals, like Violas, ornamental Cabbage & Kale. Under-plant Pansies with Daffodils or Tulips for a brilliant color display in spring.
- Fertilize Clematis with lime.
- Fertilize Iris with bone meal.
- Bring houseplants & tropicals indoors...after removing any foliage damaged by insects and/or disease, trimming up any dead or weak foliage & deadheading blooms. Stop fertilizing during winter or dilute to half strength. Wait until spring to repot.
- Continue to remove leaves from turf & bed areas. Chop leaves up with a mulching mower & leave on lawn or use in beds...makes a great mulch! Don't let leaves remain at the base of trees & shrubs. This invites insects & disease.
- Do not cut back ornamental grasses until later in winter. Right now they will add interest & some color to your landscape.
- Can dig up Caladiums, Dahlias, Tuber Begonias & Gladiolas to store for winter. Dry & store in peat moss or vermiculite.
- When you pull up your annuals, add them to your compost pile.
- Continue to edge bed & turf areas.
- Continue mowing as needed.
- Cover fish ponds with bird netting to catch falling leaves.
- Remove any Hardy or Tropical Water Lilies from water gardens. Also remove & discard any floating & marginal plants before first frost. Marginals may survive indoors if treated like a houseplant.
- Remember our feathered friends....put out plenty of birdseed & fresh water.
- Replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas to a minimum depth of 3" to 4" for winter protection.
- After first frost, plant late spring blooming bulbs.
- Divide & transplant perennials, Peonies & bulbs.
- Pay attention when pruning this month....you want to make sure it's the correct time for the particular plant you're working on.
- This will be the last month of your Rose care routine.
- Continue to deadhead Chrysanthemum blooms as they fade, this will encourage additional blooms.
- Around Halloween, it's time for another application of lawn winter fertilizer. Can overseed and add lime and/or fertilizer if necessary.
- Continue to weed in bed areas either by spraying or by hand, as necessary.
- Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall).
- Consider Earth Graphics for a Maintenance Plan. This is a renovational plan for existing landscapes. Our designers will help with overcrowded beds, transplanting, dividing & re-planting, pruning & trimming existing plant

material....more of a 'hands-on' appointment. They will take a copy of your existing blueprint & mark up the ideal times for maintenance on particular plants, as well as offer suggestions for any new areas you may want to consider adding to your landscape.

NOVEMBER

- Definitely replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas. Make sure mulch is at least 3" to 4" deep for cold weather protection & to reduce heaving.
- Just because it's winter, don't think you don't need to water! Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall).
- Great time to transplant any trees & shrubs.
- Continue to remove leaves from turf & bed areas. Chop leaves up with a mulching mower & leave on lawn or use in beds...makes a great mulch! Don't let leaves remain at the base of trees & shrubs. This invites insects & disease.
- Continue planting B&B & container trees & shrubs.
- Bring houseplants & tropicals indoors, chances are they will not survive outside during winter.
- Remember our feathered friends during the winter....keep plenty of birdseed & fresh water available.
- Around Thanksgiving, it's time for another application of lawn winter fertilizer.
- Plant late spring blooming bulbs before ground freezes.
- Mound Roses with 10" to 12" of extra dirt for protection. After ground freezes, mulch Roses that have been mounded with leaf mulch, seasoned wood chips, hay or straw.
- There are three types of plans our Earth Graphics designers will create....1) Site Plan for new construction; 2) Landscape Plan for new or existing homes; & 3) Maintenance Plan for existing landscapes. If you have a need in any of these areas, please call your local Earth Graphics office.

DECEMBER

- Plant late spring blooming bulbs before ground freezes.
- Definitely replenish or replace mulch around trees, shrubs & in bed areas. Make sure mulch is at least 3" to 4" deep for cold weather protection & to reduce heaving.
- Just because it's winter, don't think you don't need to water! Continue to water plant material, especially newly installed landscapes (if no significant rainfall).
- Continue to remove leaves from turf & bed areas. Chop leaves up with a mulching mower & leave on lawn or use in beds...makes a great mulch! Don't let leaves remain at the base of trees & shrubs. This invites insects & disease.
- Continue planting B&B & container trees & shrubs.

- Around Christmas, it's time for the last application of lawn winter fertilizer.
- Use your landscape for holiday decorating....for instance: use evergreen cuttings (like Holly, Nandina, Boxwood, Magnolia, etc.) for mantel & table displays; Dwarf Alberta Spruces make lovely 'mini' Christmas trees on porches, fir branches & grapevines can be fashioned into wreaths & decorated with holly & nandina berries, pinecones, seed pods, etc.
- Remember our feathered friends during the winter....keep plenty of birdseed & fresh water available. Kids could help make feeders with peanut butter & birdseed pinecones, orange rind cups filled with birdseed & hung on trees, twine strung with cranberries (or any fruit) & hung in trees....be creative! The birds (& squirrels!) will love it!
- Clean & oil all tools. Perform any maintenance necessary & store.
- Earth Graphics offers Gift Certificates. These make great holiday gifts!
- Happy New Year from your pals at Earth Graphics!