

December Gardening Tips
Adapted from Colorado Month to Month Gardening
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Roses



If you haven't mounded your rose bushes with 8" plus of mulch, it still isn't too late. This will help to protect them from the winter cold. To help your rose bushes survive winter temperature fluctuations, mound them with mulch, such as soil, straw or wood chips. (Don't use sawdust as it blocks winter watering.) The mulch should extend from the center of the bush out, 8" high, around all canes of the bush. (This mounding should be removed in late March or April)

Poinsettias



Place your poinsettia where it will receive as much indoor light as possible. Keep it moist and don't allow it to dry out.

How should you care for a poinsettia? Here are some ideas.

Poinsettias are one of the most common holiday plant purchases. If cared for, a poinsettia will bloom for several months and keep its leaves until summer. Place poinsettias in a place where the nighttime temperature won't drop below a consistent 60 degrees. Daytime temperature should be consistent and not exceed 80 degrees. The decorative foil plant sleeves that come with plants such as poinsettias, azaleas, and Christmas cactus prevent the pot from draining easily after watering. Poke a few holes in the sleeve, or get rid of it altogether, and put the plant in a nice basket or a larger pot.

Christmas trees



Keep a cut Christmas tree outside in a bucket of water until you are ready to bring it inside. Cut several inches off the bottom of the trunk and water it. The best thing you can do to help a cut tree last is to give it plenty of water, especially during the first week. Another remedy to help your tree last longer is to mix a solution of ½ cup of bleach, 2 tablespoons of sugar and 1 gallon of water. Pour the mixture into the tree basin and refill as necessary. The bleach kills bacteria in the basin and the sugar and water helps to prevent the needles from drying out.

Caring for our feathered friends



Location, location, location. A bird feeder should be placed where you can see the birds, but not near trees because the food will encourage squirrels. If possible, put the feeder near a protected overhand, but not so close to the windows that birds will fly into them. Suet and black sunflower seed are popular among most species of birds. Providing water to your friends is a nice bonus, but you will have to contend with ice and freezing each day. If you plan to feed the birds, be committed!