



In the Garden

Quarterly Newsletter

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Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*)

Cure for Winter Blahs

Brown puddles, bare branches, grey skies—we're starved for color this time of year. In the dreariness of winter, the delicate freshness of early bulbs really stands out.

Some of my favorite early bulbs are Snowdrop (*Galanthus*), Striped Squill (*Puschkinia*), Dwarf Iris (*Iris reticulata*), Scilla, and the familiar Spring Crocus. Any of these would look good in a clump along a path or between stepping-stones where they can be seen close-up. Also, Snowdrops, Crocus and another bulb called Winter Aconite (*Eranthus*) can make a bright blanket of color under the bare branches of a mature deciduous shrub.

Spring bulbs should be planted in autumn so they take some planning ahead. Take a stroll around your garden now to look for possible spots for winter blooming bulbs. You can buy them in

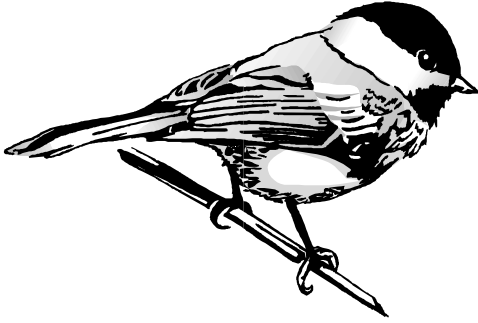
autumn in nurseries or a good online source is a specialty bulb nursery called Brent and Becky's Bulbs

www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com. I've put a reminder note on my September calendar to order early bulbs for a spot in view from my kitchen window so I'll have a winter tonic next year.

To do list for February: (Do these earlier than usual due to our warm winter)

- Cut **ferns** back to the base
- Cut ornamental **grasses** back to the base, except for evergreen varieties
- Clear dead foliage away from the crowns of **perennials**
- Cut back **roses** by 1/2
- Prune **Hydrangeas** back to the topmost healthy buds-- don't cut back too far or you will lose your crop of flowers
- Cut back summer blooming **Clematis** above plump buds approx. 24" from ground. Do not prune spring blooming Clematis.
- Pick up dead leaves and yard debris in general around the garden
- Clean out bird houses, soon birds will be nesting
- Clean out bird baths, fountains and other water features
- Rake gravel paths and patios
- Spray or sweep other patios and paths

For a more complete, personalized "to-do" list, clients may refer to their Design Information booklet.



Birds in the Garden

I've been surprised at the flocks of bushtits, Oregon junco, chickadees, sparrows, and robins that flutter up when I walk through my yard in the dead of winter, even though I don't have a bird feeder to attract them. I find that as my garden matures, an amazing number of birds shelter on my small urban lot.

They feed on the seed heads of perennials and grasses, look for insects in the ground covers and find protection in the shrubs and trees. Many of these birds spend the summer in higher elevation forests but come down where it is warmer for the winter.

The often seen landscaping predominated by lawn and lots of bark dust between widely spaced shrubs, offers little attraction to birds in winter. A more natural combination of trees, shrubs and groundcovers in addition to lawn is not only beautifully soothing to the eye, but better for the plants and creates a community of cooperation.

Birds eat insects that may prove harmful to plants later on in summer, the plants protect the soil from pounding winter rains plus the gardener gets the enjoyment of watching the busy birds without the work of maintaining a bird feeder!

Upcoming Local Events

Portland Home & Garden Show

February 22-26

Expo Center

<http://www.oloughlintradeshows.com/ots-shows-hg-pdx.html>

Features display gardens and over 1,000 booths.

Yard, Garden and Patio Show

February 24-26

Oregon Convention Center

<http://www.ygpshow.com/>

More display gardens, interesting seminars, and booths

HPSO Plant sale

April 9-10, 2005

Saturday & Sunday, 10 am – 3 pm

Washington County Fairplex,

Hillsboro, Oregon

<http://www.hardyplantsociety.org/plantsale.htm>

Over 100 nurseries offer a tremendous selection of plants.



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