



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION
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Ramsey County Master Gardener Volunteer Program offers

Garden Advice for Winter 2023

December – January – February



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A Note from the Master Gardeners

For us gardeners, winter is a time for dreaming and reflection. In the Ramsey County Master Gardener Volunteer Program, we're thinking back [on the successes and challenges](#) of the 2023 season while eagerly dreaming of new ways to bring the best of garden information to our neighbors and communities next year.

We likewise encourage you to keep your gardens in mind over the cold months! Consider [signing up for one of our many online classes](#) on starting seeds, pruning trees and shrubs, growing microgreens, caring for houseplants and more. Find us at several of the [winter markets](#)

[around town](#). And as always, send us your garden questions through the Extension [Ask-A-Master-Gardener page](#).

As the year comes to a close, we're filled with gratitude for all of you—for your thoughtful questions, insightful ideas, participation in our horticulture classes, and for helping spread the best practices we learn and share in many garden locations across Ramsey County. Thanks as well to [everyone who donated](#) on Give to the Max Day! Your generosity helps us reach more gardeners in Ramsey County. (If you missed the deadline but still want to contribute before the end of the year, [you can do so here](#).)

Wishing you the happiest of holiday seasons!
Your friendly neighborhood Master Gardener

Winter Garden Activities

DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Protect plants from animal damage and cold damage● Stratify native seeds● Order seed catalogs● Visit local winter farmers markets
JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Plot out seed-starting schedule, start long-season seeds, plan seed starting schedule● Check houseplants for signs of disease, stress● Take inventory of garden gear
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Try winter-sowing cool-season seeds● Prune trees & shrubs● Clean gardening tools

Winter Garden Information

Caring for Holiday Cacti

Thanksgiving cactus, Christmas cactus, and Easter cactus are popular houseplants, often given as gifts during the holiday season. But people often complain about the lack of flower blooms. [Understand how light, temperature, and overall plant health affect blooming.](#)

Helping Pollinators Survive the Winter

Most native pollinators survive not as adults, but in egg, caterpillar or chrysalis form in a hibernation-like state that allows them to withstand cold temperatures. [This guide from the University of New Hampshire Extension](#) has tips for helping pollinators survive in your garden.

Reduce Holiday Food Waste

Make it a holiday resolution this year to cut down on food waste! If you're hosting, [try this online guest-imator tool](#) to help calculate how much food you need to buy. And remember you can drop off food scraps 24/7 [at food scrap dropoff sites across Ramsey County](#).

Preparing for Winter Weather in a Changing Climate

Climate change is changing Minnesota winters, which are warming two-to-three times faster than our summers. These more mild temperatures and a trend toward heavier precipitation events are increasing the frequency of freeze/thaw cycles, ice storms, rain on snow events, and heavy snowstorms. [Check out these tips from Hennepin County](#) on how you can prepare to stay safe this winter.

Prune Oaks Now to Avoid Oak Wilt

[Oak wilt](#) is a debilitating fungal disease that can kill all species of oaks quickly. It spreads by sap beetle feeding and through diseased roots connecting underground with healthy roots.

According to Extension's forestry team, it is safe to prune oaks in Minnesota now through March when insect and fungal pathogens are inactive.

Don't Feed the Deer This Winter

While providing piles of corn, hay or other feed can be a feel-good act, [it often results in bad consequences](#): disease, auto accidents, habitat loss and animal behavior changes. Do the deer a favor and skip the feeder this winter. Do yourself a favor and [prepare your deer deterrents](#) before the ground freezes!

Be Mindful of Deicing Salts This Winter

Before you pull out your deicing salts to make conditions safer, [consider the impact of these chemicals on plants and waterways](#). Remember, good maintenance reduces the need for salt!

More Resources to Help You Grow

[Ramsey County Master Gardener Volunteer Program Website](#)

[Ask a Master Gardener](#) Online & Phone Services

[Yard and Garden Information](#)

[Ramsey County Yard Waste](#) & [Food Scraps](#) Drop-off Locations

[Soil Testing Laboratory](#)