

JANUARY

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Planning/Maintenance/Activities

On warm days, check perennials for heaving.

Abrupt temperature changes can cause shallow-rooted plants to push out of the ground, exposing roots. Cover plants with a three- to four-inch layer of mulch, such as woodchips, straw, or evergreen branches in October to protect plants.

Keep road and sidewalk salt away from plants.

Construct a screen of burlap, if necessary to keep salt spray off plants.

Uncover plants weighted down with heavy snow.

- ❖ Gently brush off branches to prevent breakage. If frozen, let snow melt naturally.
- ❖ If there is not too much snow, remove blown-in leaves and other debris from your yard and around your shrubs, especially roses and rhododendrons. This should help reduce unwanted pests and diseases when spring arrives.

Snow is an excellent insulator and can protect landscape plants from the devastating effects of repeated freezing and thawing.



Flower bulbs and garden root crops, in particular, will benefit from an insulating layer of snow. Plus,

the added moisture when the snow melts is good for plants.

Prepare for spring planting.

Roughly determine the length of your growing season by looking at growing degree-days for [Ellensburg](#) and [Cle Elum](#).

Evaluate last year's garden and decide what changes need to be made.

Draw garden plans on graph paper, including a wish list of plants you would like to add.

Consider building [raised beds](#) for easier maintenance and less water use.



Consider replacing varieties of plants that are susceptible to disease with [resistant cultivars](#) or with [native plants](#).

Junipers and arborvitae are the evergreen standbys but also look into barberry, boxwood winter creeper, Oregon grape, hardy hollies, rhododendrons, red twig dogwood, and Otto Luyken laurel. These take some pruning but the novelty is worth it. Keep each plant's fertilizer and water needs in mind as you plan.

Clean pruners and other small garden tools with rubbing alcohol and sharpen garden tools.

Continue to feed birds.

Many plants offer winterberries, seeds, and pods for birds and other wildlife. Consider adding four-season [plants to your landscape](#).

Reapply or redistribute mulch that has blown or washed away during winter.

Keep a garden journal.

Consult your journal in the winter so you can better plan for the growing season.

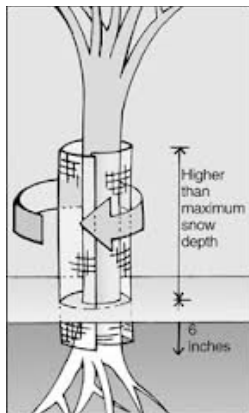
Lawn

If your lawn is frozen, avoid walking over the same areas or you may find bald spots in the spring. A frozen lawn is not impervious to damage.

Woody Landscape Plants & Fruit Trees

Monitor tree health.

- ❖ Check young trees for [rodent](#) injury on lower trunks. Prevent injury with hardware cloth or



protective collars. Eliminate hiding places by removing weeds.

- ❖ If the temperature gets above freezing, pull out a hose and give evergreen shrubs and trees a good soaking to help alleviate the symptoms of [winter burn](#), especially on [rhododendrons](#).

“Leaf” through [seed, plant, and tree catalogs](#) and make plans for landscape and home orchard additions.

Order plants early for best selection.

Gardeners in Kittitas County face unique challenges.

Cold winters and hot, dry summers, and lots of wind create a tough gardening climate. It's important to plant appropriate [cold hardy](#) trees, perennials and shrubs suitable for Kittitas County.

Flowers, Vegetables and Small Fruit

[Wood ashes from the fireplace can be spread in the garden, but don't overdo it.](#)

Wood ashes increase soil pH, and excess application can make some nutrients unavailable for plant uptake. Have soil tested to be certain of the pH before adding wood ash.

Plan for continuous color and texture to gardens and yards.

Try to select perennials that have an extended bloom time. It is a good idea to place early blooming flowers close to the house. Viewing will most likely be done through a window. Later blooming plants can be placed farther out in the landscape where a stroll through the yard will show them to their best advantage.

Plan your vegetable garden.

Take the time to sketch your garden layout on graph paper. Include what to grow, spacing, arrangement, and number of plants needed; this will make the actual planting much easier. As you sketch your garden be aware of the importance of [crop rotation](#). Also, consider wind direction, placement of tall plants that may shade shorter ones, and drainage. [Home Vegetable Gardening in Washington](#) provides an excellent primer for both novice and seasoned gardeners.

Fruit Trees and [Berries for the Home Garden.](#)

Consider planting [fruit trees](#) or berries, such as raspberries, [strawberries](#), and blueberries. Choosing the right variety and proper plant site will ensure a fruitful harvest.

Gardening in Kittitas County

Gardening in Kittitas County presents many challenges and opportunities. While there are ample days of sunshine and nights that meet and exceed plants' chilling requirements, there are extremes of heat in the summer and cold in the winter. Wind is a constant in all parts of the county and snow depth is a factor, especially in the higher elevations. Add to this the fact that Eastern Washington has an arid climate and most plants require additional regular watering, especially while becoming established. Last, but certainly not least, are the pests that prefer ones' garden and orchard to their natural diet and would ravage these if homeowners did not use special precautions against them.

Kittitas County, not unlike many counties in Washington, has differences within the county with respect to rainfall, elevation, and temperature. Therefore, the length of growing season is different depending on location. While the ground may be workable in Ellensburg (lower county) at the beginning of April, it may still be covered in a foot of snow in Roslyn (upper county). While the lower county may require minimum winter protection for most crops, upper county requires maximum protection for most perennials that do not naturally grow there.

At higher elevations such as Ronald (2,349 feet), the average growing season is 90 days with last frosts in early June (approximately June 9th) and first frosts in early September (approximately September 2nd); In Cle Elum (1,930 feet), the average growing season is 90 to 120 days with last frosts in late May (approximately May 24th) and first frosts in the middle of September (approximately September 11th). Cle Elum receives about 22" of rain on average. At lower elevations such as Ellensburg (1,542 feet), conditions are much drier and frost-free days are longer. The average growing season in Ellensburg is about 120 days with last frosts in early May (approximately May 11th) and first frosts around the end of September (approximately September 25th).

Ronald, Roslyn, and Cle Elum are rated USDA Zone 4 (-30°F minimum temperature) while Ellensburg is rated at USDA Zone 5 (-20°F. minimum).

The authors of this e-book are using techniques deemed necessary for their particular region within Kittitas County. The reader's to do list will

be specific to their area and their particular climate. Be sure to check resources provided to determine specific climate area.

This calendar is a compilation of many sources of information. Many thanks for the outstanding guidance provided by: Washington State University Extension, Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, The Morton Arboretum, Oregon State University Extension and many others as evidenced by the extensive use of hyperlinks.

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For more information:
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