

In the Garden

First half of January:

- Use calcium-based deicing salts if needed on icy sidewalks and driveways. Do not use fertilizer.
- On warm days, go outside and check for heaving of perennials and bulbs. If heaving is evident, press down firmly and cover with at least 2 inches of organic mulch.
- Low light levels in your home may be causing some problems with houseplants. Plants that normally do best on the north side of the house, move to an east window. Move plants that are ordinarily in an east window to a south window. Keep houseplants watered and pick off dead leaves. Locate houseplants in rooms with fairly constant temperatures and higher humidity.

Second half of January:

- Look through plant and seed catalogs to decide what to buy and plant this spring. Compare new, improved pest- and disease-resistant varieties over older varieties.
- Start pansy plants from seeds indoors. They should be ready to transplant outdoors in mid-March to bloom with spring tulips and daffodils.
- Begin dormant pruning of fruit trees and grapevines and try to finish pruning them before March.
- Winter is the ideal time to apply horticultural oil sprays to kill overwintering mites, aphids and scale. Use this oil on deciduous plants and hardy evergreens, but not on needle-leaved species. Spray horticultural oils when temperatures are above 40 degrees but not within 24 hours of a freeze. Read and follow all label directions.
- Use cut boughs of a Christmas tree to cover tender perennials, leave the tree standing outside as a “bird tree” through the winter or recycle through community programs.

Osprey

The osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*, a.k.a. fish eagle, sea hawk, river hawk or fish hawk, is a large, distinctively shaped hawk, brown above and white below with a wingspan of up to 71 inches. Ospreys are often seen along shorelines or waterways. They make huge stick nests out in the open on dead trees, poles and channel markers. They are unique among North American raptors for their diet of live fish, which they catch by diving, feet first, to snatch out of the water.



Photo by Steve Decarlo