

# Timely Turf Tips

## January 2016

**Happy New Year!** January is a month of beginning, which makes it a great time to think about planning for the next growing season. Dig out any notes or pictures from last season about the ideas that worked well or not so well. Use the seed catalogs that should be arriving in the mail soon to spark fresh ideas. Another resource for ideas is the local library with their selection of horticultural magazines and books. Starting a plan now can lead to great start for next spring.

### Capture Winter Interest for next season

Just because snow covers the garden for a quarter of the year, it doesn't mean that the garden can't still provide some interesting views. Look out your windows now and think about how to add some winter interest with color, texture, and structure. Evergreen trees and shrubs can add a background with their color and shape. Consider adding an arbor, trellis, or bench for their year-round form. When choosing plants for winter interest consider the color of any berries or fruit and the color of the bark or stem. American Cranberrybush, Compact American Cranberrybush, Winterberry, and crabapples are good examples of plants with colorful fruit. Red or Yellow Twig Dogwood and willows like 'Flame' or coral bark willow provide contrast to the whiteness of the winter landscape. Ornamental grasses also add interest to the landscape with their movement and texture. Be sure to cut them to the ground before any new growth starts next spring.



### Cold Weather Tips

- Birds are looking for high calorie and high fat foods to provide the energy needed for winter survival. Hanging suet and keeping the feeders full will help them meet their needs. Having a water source during the winter is important for birds. Consider adding a bird bath heater to your outdoor garden.
- Stamp or shovel snow around the feeders to provide easier access to spilled seed for ground feeding birds.
- Winter survival can cause birds to gather together in larger flocks and can lead to the spread of disease. It's important to keep feeders clean by regularly replacing old seed and washing feeders that have become too soiled by birds. Clean by removing all seed, wash to remove any residue on the feeder, and disinfect it with an application of bleach solution (nine parts water, one part chloride bleach.) Remove any remaining solution by rinsing in clean water and allow the feeder to completely dry before refilling.
- Outdoor pets require additional food and a fresh, unfrozen source of water when the temperature drops. It's important to check to see that the water is not frozen. Think about using plastic or rubber containers and add a heater if you are not able to replace the water frequently enough.
- After walking your pet outside on winter streets, it is a good idea to wipe off the pads of their paws when they enter the house to remove any salt or chemical residue that may irritate the skin or stomach lining if licked off.

We have calcium chloride and magnesium chloride for cold weather ice melting. Also, poultry grit is great for providing traction. Keep some in your car and by the front door to reduce slipping.

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