



Time to get serious with the seed catalogs. Make a list of the species you want to grow from seed and then look over the available varieties. Careful reading will tell you which offer the greatest yield, the best flavor, the most disease resistance, and then you decide which ones best fit your needs.



Pray for snow! So far, this has been a largely snow-free winter for southern New England. Of course, you have added leaves around new plantings to protect them from sub-freezing temperatures and frost heaves, but now it's time to look for more help from Mother Nature. Snow is a natural insulator and a very efficient one—ten inches of snow provide the same insulation as six inches of fiberglass. Snow keeps roots happily buried, not subject to freeze and thaw cycles.



But skip the salt. Once the snow arrives, avoid using salt on sidewalks and driveways. Sand or kitty litter will provide traction and even assist in melting as it warms on sunny days. Best of all, there will be no damage to your plants now, or when the ground thaws in the spring. The sand or litter will disappear into the garden soil without damaging roots or poisoning the soil.

Be kind to your houseplants. Winter may be cold and dry for outdoor plants, but our indoor plants suffer from hot and dry. With the thermostat set at 68 or 72 degrees, you are drying out the air as you warm it. Place plants on a tray covered with pebbles where you regularly add water. As the water evaporates, your plant breathe easier. Plants too big to be gathered together? Add pebbles and water into large saucers under each individual. Additional humidity in the house is also a benefit to you. Plants also need regular watering, but less than in other seasons. Unless you are using grow lights, your plants will respond to the reduced light by slowing down their growth which also eliminates the need for fertilizing.

Written and created by Betty Sanders. For more horticultural suggestions for January and throughout the year, please visit www.BettyOnGardening.com