

*Tw'as the day after Christmas and gone from our house,  
Were our children and grandkids, leaving me and my spouse  
Missing their laughter and hugs of good cheer,  
Tw'as time to get ready to meet the New Year.*

With nearly a week of December remaining and the New Year's celebration forthcoming, one might think there is little urgency in preparing for another season of gardening. After all, spring is a good three months away; it's cold outside; snow is often in the forecast; and I'm thinking a winter's rest is well deserved.

Resting from the physical toil of gardening is always welcome, but for most gardeners, the mental part of gardening never goes away. Now is an opportune time for gardeners to regroup mentally. It's time to reflect on last season's successes as well as last season's failures. It is also the perfect time to plan.



One of the best ways to plan is to read. Taunton Press's *fine Gardening* is an excellent gardening magazine. I recently received my Jan/Feb issue in the mail, and whenever I get a free moment, I'm reading the articles and enjoying the photographs. Although *fine Gardening* is my favorite gardening publication, many other great gardening publications exist. I also

like to read *Garden Gate*, *Organic Life*, *Horticulture*, *Birds and Blooms*, and *HGTV magazine*.

Another great source of gardening information that doesn't require a subscription involves the National Garden Bureau. I urge you to check out their website at [www.ngb.org](http://www.ngb.org)

Over the years, I've relied on this non-profit organization to provide a plethora of research-based gardening information. Its mission is "to improve the quality of life and the environment through increased use of seeds and plants." The National Garden Bureau had its beginnings in the 1920s in the wake of World War I. The NGB came of age during World War II encouraging homeowners to grow Victory Gardens. The postwar years saw an emphasis on community beautification. Membership in this organization consists of individuals and firms or corporations of good reputation who are engaged in the production and/or sale of horticulture products for home gardeners.

If one were to access NGB's website, not only would one find an assortment of excellent gardening articles but also cutting edge information and beautiful photos of the new varieties available for the 2016 gardening season. I've discovered that its gardening articles offer excellent tips and growing techniques for home gardeners interested in growing annual flowers and vegetables. All this is available at no charge. Furthermore, any of the information can be reprinted as long as credit is given to the National Garden Bureau.



Now that Christmas, 2015, has come to an end, and with only five days remaining until we celebrate the New Year, my goal is to take down the tree, put away the decorations and catch up on my garden reading. I'm reasonably sure that if and when I have a free moment during the month of January, you will either find me at my keyboard checking out great gardening websites such as the National Garden Bureau's or sitting aside our fireplace in my favorite big chair and sipping a cup of hot cocoa while reading and dreaming about gardening in 2016.

Best wishes to you and yours for a Happy New Year!