

## **December Gardening Tips**

### **Soil**

Now is a good time to take soil samples from lawns and gardens to local Garden Centers or Extension Service for analysis. Take a small amount from each area, dry it out, mark on each container where it came from and what you want to grow in that soil.

Virginia Cooperative Extension, 310 Shea Dr., 7:30-5:00 M-F, 382-6348  
[www.offices.ext.vt.edu/chesapeake](http://www.offices.ext.vt.edu/chesapeake)

### **Trees**

Now that trees have lost their leaves and are becoming dormant, it is an excellent time to fertilize them. Roots develop all winter, making for a stronger tree or shrub next spring. Use easy Tree Food Spikes or 12-6-6 granular fertilizer

### **Don't Forget the Birds!**

Decorate a outdoor tree for the Birds! They'll love you!!  
Great indoor project with the Grandchildren.

1. Cookie cut slices of bread, poke a small hole for hanging, lightly toast in oven
2. Make "Glop": 1c peanut butter +4c cornmeal +1c shortening +1c flour, mix with hands or spoon, fill in shortened paper cups, orange-peel cups or scooped out apple halves
3. Slather peanut butter, lard, bacon grease on pine cones & roll them in seed mix
4. Birds also like your left-overs like: cornbread crumbs, whole oats, stale donuts, slice apples, oranges & bananas, dog biscuits, cottage cheese, cooked potatoes, broken squash seeds, pecans, walnuts & pie crust ! Raise on a platform so not to attract little rodents.
5. They still need fresh water in winter, so crack the ice and pore some more in.

### **Ashes**

Ashes from your wood fire can be spread around bulbs, fruit trees, vegetable & flower garden. Don't put around acid loving plants like azaleas, camellias or rhododendrons

### **Poinsettias**

Give as much light as possible, feed 1x/month, water weekly

### **Christmas Tree watering**

1 gal hot water +1/4c horticultural iron chelate +2c light corn syrup + 4t bleach  
To keep from drying out. (per Va. Coop. Ext.) don't get on carpet !