

January Is The Time To:

- turn compost
- clean-up flower beds, remove dead leaves and debris
- firm down roots that have lifted from frost heaves
- if you haven't done so yet - mulch the base of your hosta, roses, strawberries
- check stored bulbs (gladiolus, dahlia, canna and begonia) for root rot, mold, disease, or insects - separate and discard anything that doesn't look nice
- after heavy snowfalls, shake the snow off evergreen shrubs and trees so they don't get broken branches!
- check cuttings of geraniums, fuchsia, ivy etc. and discard any that have not taken or are mushy
- clean out cold frame or green house in preparation for spring seed planting
- send away for seed catalogues and order seeds for unusual flowers or vegetables; Territorial Seed catalogues are in stock now - seed racks will be set up in early January
- plan what to plant where - in the veggie garden and flower beds
- dormant spray roses, fruit trees and deciduous shrubs when weather permits (12 to 24 hours with no rain)
- cut a few branches of forsythia, flowering cherry, plum, witchhazel or camellia for forcing indoors - pound the end of the stems with a hammer before sticking into your vase - this makes for better water uptake
- prune fruit trees while dormant - this month or next, to encourage flowers and fruit for the coming season. Get a professional gardening person to do the cutting and clean-up if you can't bear to do it yourself. ~~Call our store for referrals~~ - we have a list of well qualified people you can call
- create a planter or basket for your front porch with primula or spring-flowering bulbs - these will be in stock come ~~January 10th~~.

Robbie Burns Day is January 25th, so from the out-of-print **A Country Cup**, here are Wilma Paterson's recipes for:

Moorland Tea

(associated with Robert Burns).

Mix together carefully dried heather tops (*Erica cinerea*, *E. tetralix*; *Calluna vulgaris*), bramble leaves, *blackberry* (*Rubus fruticosus*), and the leaves of bilberry *blueberry* (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), wild thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*, *T. drucei*), and wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*). Prepare as for China tea and sweeten, if you wish, with heather honey.

Also from Wilma, the incredibly creative brewer:

Heather Ale

- 1 gal. heather tops
- 2 lb. malt extract
- 1 1/2 lb. sugar
- 3 gals. water
- 1 oz. dried yeast

Cut the heather tops with scissors when in full bloom, but not overblown, and boil them in 1 gallon of the water for nearly 1 hour. Strain onto the malt extract and sugar through a jelly bag and stir till dissolved. Add remaining water and, when lukewarm, add the dried yeast. Cover with a cloth and leave in a warm place for five or six days. Siphon into screw-top bottles, adding 1 teaspoon of sugar to each.

Leave until clear before drinking and always decant carefully into a jug to avoid the sediment. Heather ale takes longer to clear than other ales, so be patient.