



# What to Plant in December

## Vegetables:

### **Cauliflower (*Brassica oleracea* var. *botrytis*):**

- Care: Prefers cool climate and rich, well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Plant in well-prepared soil with frequent watering.

### **Beetroot (*Beta vulgaris*):**

- Care: Cold-resistant, requires well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Sow directly in the ground, keeping the soil moist.

### **Celery (*Apium graveolens*):**

- Care: Prefers cool and moist climates.
- Planting Tips: Plant in well-prepared, moist soil.

## Herbs and Aromatic Plants:

### **Bay Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*):**

- Care: Prefers sunny or semi-shaded locations with well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Plant in areas with good drainage and regular watering.

### **Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*):**

- Care: Prefers semi-shaded locations with moist, well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Sow directly in the ground or in pots.

### **Sage (*Salvia officinalis*):**

- Care: Prefers sunny locations with well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Plant in well-prepared soil with limited watering.



# Fruit Trees:

## Lemon Tree (*Citrus limon*):

- Care: Needs well-drained soil and frost protection.
- Planting Tips: Plant in sunny locations with regular watering.

## Orange Tree (*Citrus sinensis*):

- Care: Prefers sunny locations and well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Plant in wind-protected areas.

## Quince Tree (*Cydonia oblonga*):

- Care: Prefers sunny locations with well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Plant in deep, organically rich soil.



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## Flowers and Ornamental Plants:

### **Alocasia Ninja:**

- Care: Prefers moist, well-drained soil and indirect light.
- Planting Tips: Plant in pots indoors or in protected areas.

### **Calathea:**

- Care: Prefers a humid environment with indirect light.
- Planting Tips: Plant in pots with good indoor plant soil.

### **Holly (Ilex):**

- Care: Resistant to low temperatures, prefers sunny locations.
- Planting Tips: Plant in well-drained soil, ideal for hedges and gardens.

### **Pyracantha:**

- Care: Hardy plant that prefers sunny locations and well-drained soil.
- Planting Tips: Ideal for hedges, provides food for birds.



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## Tribute to the Magnolia: An Exquisite Ornamental Plant

Magnolia is one of the most impressive and elegant ornamental plants, known for its large, fragrant flowers and lush foliage. Cultivating magnolias in Cyprus is feasible, as the country's climatic conditions are generally favorable for their growth.

### History and Origin

The magnolia is named after the French botanist Pierre Magnol. It originates from North and Central America, East Asia, and the West Indies. This plant has been appreciated for its beautiful flowers and resilience, making it popular in gardens and parks worldwide.



## Varieties of Magnolia

There are many magnolia varieties that can be cultivated in Cyprus, each with its unique characteristics:

### **Magnolia grandiflora (Southern Magnolia)**

- Characteristics: Large, white, fragrant flowers and glossy, dark green leaves.
- Suitable for: Large gardens and parks, resistant to warm climates.

### **Magnolia soulangeana (Saucer Magnolia)**

- Characteristics: Pink or white cup-shaped flowers, medium-sized tree.
- Suitable for: Small to medium-sized gardens, resistant to various climatic conditions.

### **Magnolia stellata (Star Magnolia)**

- Characteristics: Small, white or pink flowers with many petals resembling a star.
- Suitable for: Small gardens and pots, prefers sheltered locations from the wind.



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## Cultivation and Care of Magnolia in Cyprus

Cultivating magnolias in Cyprus can be successful if the proper care practices are followed, taking into account the specific climatic conditions of the area.

### Location Selection

- **Light:** Magnolias prefer sunny or semi-shaded locations. It is important to place them in positions that receive plenty of light throughout the day.
- **Protection:** Magnolias should be protected from strong winds, as their flowers and leaves are sensitive.

### Soil

- **Quality:** Magnolias prefer well-drained, organically rich soils. Opt for slightly acidic to neutral soil.
- **Preparation:** Add compost or well-rotted manure to the soil before planting to improve structure and fertility.

### Watering

- **Frequency:** Magnolias need regular watering, especially during the hot summer months. The soil should remain moist but not waterlogged.
- **Moisture:** During winter, reduce watering but keep the soil moist.



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### Fertilization

- Seasonality: Fertilize magnolias in spring and autumn with a balanced fertilizer. Prefer organic fertilizers for better results.
- Caution: Avoid over-fertilizing, which can cause growth problems.

### Pruning

- Frequency: Prune magnolias after flowering, removing dead or damaged branches.
- Shape: Prune to maintain the desired shape and size of the tree, but avoid excessive pruning.

### Protection from Diseases and Pests

- Monitoring: Regularly check plants for signs of diseases or pests, such as aphids and scale insects.
- Natural Methods: Use natural insecticides or biological methods to combat pests.



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## How to Maintain Poinsettias Throughout the Holidays

The poinsettia, also known as the Christmas star, is one of the most popular plants during the Christmas season, with its striking red, pink, or white bracts that add color and vibrancy to the space. However, to keep the poinsettia beautiful and healthy throughout the holidays, it needs proper care. Here are some tips on how to care for your poinsettia during the holidays in Cyprus, considering the area's climatic conditions.

### Selection and Placement of the Poinsettia

#### Choosing a Healthy Plant

- Choose a poinsettia with healthy, lush leaves and bracts free from spots or signs of disease.
- Ensure the plant has dense and well-developed foliage.

#### Placement

- Place the poinsettia in a bright spot with plenty of indirect light. Avoid direct sunlight, which can cause leaf burn.
- Avoid locations with drafts, such as near doors or windows that are frequently opened and closed.



# Temperature and Humidity

## Temperature

- The poinsettia prefers temperatures between 18°C and 24°C. Avoid sudden temperature changes and very low temperatures, as they can cause leaf drop.
- Keep the temperature steady, especially at night.

## Humidity

- The poinsettia needs moderate humidity levels. If the indoor atmosphere is dry, especially due to heating, use a humidifier or place the plant on a tray with pebbles and water to increase the humidity around it.

# Watering and Fertilization

## Watering

- Water the poinsettia regularly, keeping the soil moist but not waterlogged. Let the top layer of soil dry slightly before the next watering.
- Avoid overwatering, which can cause root rot. Ensure the pot has good drainage.

## Fertilization

- During the holidays, the poinsettia does not need frequent fertilization. You can apply a low-nitrogen liquid fertilizer once during the holiday season to maintain the vibrancy of the leaves.



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# Maintenance and Care

## Removing Dry Leaves

- Remove dry or damaged leaves to maintain the healthy appearance of the plant and prevent the spread of disease.

## Pest Protection

- Regularly check the plant for signs of pests, such as aphids or mites. Use natural insecticides or soapy water to remove them.

## Pruning

- If the poinsettia begins to grow excessively, you can prune it slightly to maintain its shape. Pruning should be done after the flowering period, in March or April.

# After the Holidays

## Repotting

- After the holidays, when the plant starts to lose its leaves, you can repot it in a larger pot with fresh soil to support its growth for the next year.

## Rest Period

- The poinsettia goes through a rest period after the holidays. Reduce watering and stop fertilization until it starts to develop new growth in the spring.



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## Winter Care for Cacti and Succulents

Cacti and succulents are popular plants due to their resilience and minimal maintenance requirements. However, during the cold winter months, they need special care to stay healthy and vibrant. Here are some tips on how to care for cacti and succulents in winter, focusing on watering and frost protection.

### Winter Conditions and Needs of Cacti and Succulents

Cacti and succulents are plants that mainly originate from dry and hot regions but can adapt to different climates. During the winter, their growth slows down, and they enter a dormancy period. Therefore, their care must be adjusted to the new conditions.



## Watering Tips

### Reducing Watering

- During winter, the water needs of cacti and succulents decrease drastically.
- Make sure the soil is completely dry before the next watering. Excess moisture can cause root rot.

### Using the Right Watering Material

- Use lukewarm water for watering cacti and succulents during the cold months. Cold water can shock the roots.

### Avoiding Excess Water

- Avoid watering your plants on damp or rainy days. Excess moisture in the environment can lead to rot issues.



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# Frost Protection

## Moving to Protected Locations

- If your cacti and succulents are in pots, move them indoors or to protected locations, such as a greenhouse or near windows with plenty of light.
- Ensure the indoor spaces where you move the plants are well-ventilated and receive adequate light.

## Using Protective Materials

- Use protective covers such as frost protection fabrics or plastic covers to protect the plants from low temperatures during the night.
- Be careful not to cover the plants too tightly, allowing air circulation and avoiding moisture buildup.

## Insulating the Pots

- If your cacti and succulents are in pots, place them on wooden frames or foam materials to prevent direct contact with the cold ground.
- Wrap the pots with materials like styrofoam or cloth for extra insulation.

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# General Care Tips

## Minimizing Fertilization

- During winter, cacti and succulents do not need fertilization, as their growth has slowed down. Postpone fertilization until spring when the plants start growing again.

## Monitoring for Diseases and Pests

- Regularly check your plants for signs of diseases or pests, such as aphids or mites. If you notice problems, treat them immediately with natural insecticides or soapy water.

## Providing Light

- Cacti and succulents need plenty of light even in winter. Place the plants near windows with southern or western exposure to receive as much natural light as possible.

## Ventilation

- Maintain good ventilation in the indoor spaces where your plants are located to prevent the growth of fungi and other pathogens.



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## Guide to Creating a Garden from Scratch: A Professional Guide for Beginners and Professional Gardeners

Creating a garden from scratch is an exciting and rewarding process that requires careful planning and a good understanding of the key factors that influence plant growth. Whether you are a beginner or a professional gardener, this guide will provide you with the necessary information and tips to start the garden of your dreams.

### Factors to Consider

#### Location Selection Light

- Sunlight: Most plants need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight daily. Choose a location that receives enough light throughout the day.
- Shade: For shade-loving plants, choose a location that is protected from direct sunlight, such as under trees or next to buildings.

#### Wind Protection

- Natural Barriers: Use fences, walls, or natural barriers to protect plants from strong winds that can cause damage.
- Trees and Shrubs: Plant trees and shrubs to create sheltered microclimates.



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## Soil Soil Type

- Sandy Soil: Drains quickly but lacks nutrients. Add organic materials to improve fertility.
- Clay Soil: Retains moisture but can become hard and compact. Add sand and organic materials to improve drainage.
- Loamy Soil: Ideal for most plants as it retains moisture and nutrients. Improve texture with compost and organic materials.

## Soil Testing

- pH Testing: Determine the soil's acidity or alkalinity to select the right plants. Most plants prefer slightly acidic to neutral soil (pH 6.0-7.0).
- Nutrient Testing: Check nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium levels in the soil and adjust fertilization accordingly.

## Water Water Sources

- Irrigation System: Install an irrigation system to ensure uniform and regular watering. Drip and sprinkler systems are ideal for water conservation.
- Rainwater Collection: Use rainwater tanks to reduce water consumption from the network.

## Drainage

- Improving Drainage: Ensure the soil drains well to prevent root rot. Use raised beds or add sand and organic materials to the soil.



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### Plant Selection Local Species

- Adapted Plants: Choose plants that are adapted to local climatic conditions and soil for better results and less maintenance.

### Plant Combination

- Perennial and Annual Plants: Combine perennials that bloom each year with annuals for continuous flowering and variety.
- Companion Plants: Use companion plants that help repel pests and improve plant growth.

### Garden Design Layout

- Spaces and Pathways: Create spaces for plants, pathways, and seating areas for easy access and aesthetic beauty.
- Elevation Differences: Use raised beds and retaining walls to add depth and dimension to your garden.

### Complementary Elements

- Decorative Elements: Add decorative elements such as rocks, sculptures, and water features to enhance the garden's beauty.
- Lighting: Install garden lighting to create ambiance and extend the garden's use into the evening hours



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## 6Care and Maintenance Watering and Fertilization

- Regular Watering: Water your plants regularly according to their needs. Use an irrigation system for even watering.
- Fertilization: Fertilize your plants with organic fertilizers to promote growth and flowering.

## Pruning and Cultivation

- Pruning: Prune your plants to maintain their shape, remove dead or damaged branches, and encourage new growth.
- Cultivation: Cultivate the soil around plants to improve aeration and drainage.

## Protection from Diseases and Pests

- Prevention: Use natural insecticides and biological methods to prevent and combat diseases and pests.
- Monitoring: Regularly check your plants for signs of diseases or pests and take necessary action immediately.

Creating a garden from scratch is a process that requires planning, patience, and a love for nature. By considering the above factors and following care and maintenance tips, you can create a beautiful and healthy garden that will bring you joy and satisfaction for many years. Whether it's a small balcony garden or a large outdoor space, the right approach and careful care will ensure the success of your project.



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## Tribute to Tropical Plants

Tropical plants are known for their exotic appearance, striking colors, and unique characteristics. Below is a tribute to tropical plants, with instructions on their care, taking into account the climatic conditions of Cyprus.

### Climatic Conditions in Cyprus

Cyprus has a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild, rainy winters. Temperatures range from 10°C in winter to 40°C in summer, with high sunshine and moderate humidity. These conditions are favorable for growing tropical plants, provided some precautions are taken.



# Selection of Tropical Plants

Some of the tropical plants that can thrive in Cyprus include:

## **Avocado (*Persea americana*):**

- Evergreen fruit tree that prefers well-drained soils and moderate sunlight.
- Needs a warm climate and relative humidity of 60-65%.
- Provides high-quality fruit from November to April.

## **Cherimoya (*Annona cherimola*):**

- Evergreen fruit tree with moderate water requirements and good drainage.
- Resistant to partial sunlight and requires a warm climate.
- Produces large, fragrant fruit from February to April.

## **Mango (*Mangifera indica*):**

- Evergreen fruit tree that thrives in sandy soils with good drainage.
- Requires warm areas with high humidity and temperatures of 24-27°C.
- Produces juicy and sweet fruit in August and September.

## **Papaya (*Carica papaya*):**

- Evergreen fruit tree with moderate water requirements and well-drained soils.
- Resistant to heat and humidity, but sensitive to cold.
- Produces soft, sweet-tasting fruit from July to August.



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# Care of Tropical Plants

Caring for tropical plants requires attention to certain parameters:

## Soil and Planting:

- Use well-drained soil with neutral or slightly acidic pH.
- Plant the plants in locations protected from strong winds and cold.
- Maintain planting distances of 3-8 meters depending on the species.

## Watering:

- Water the plants regularly, especially during the growth and fruiting periods.
- Avoid excessive moisture that can cause root rot.

## Temperature and Humidity:

- Tropical plants need temperatures above 5°C and relative humidity of 60-65%.
- Protect plants from frost and sudden temperature changes.

## Fertilization:

- Use a complete fertilizer quarterly to enhance growth and productivity.
- Prefer organic fertilizers for better long-term soil health.

## Protection from Diseases and Pests:

- Regularly check plants for signs of diseases or pests.
- Use natural insecticides and fungicides to address problems.



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## Tribute to Deciduous Fruit Trees

Deciduous fruit trees are an important category of trees that offer a variety of fruits rich in nutrients. These trees are characterized by shedding their leaves in the fall and regenerating them in the spring. Here is a tribute to deciduous fruit trees, focusing on their climatic and soil requirements, water and light needs, cold tolerance, properties, and fruits.

### Soil Requirements

Deciduous fruit trees thrive in various soils, but good drainage is critical to avoid root rot. They prefer light to medium-textured soils with a suitable sandy-loam composition and pH of 6.5-6.8.

### Water Requirements

The water needs of deciduous fruit trees vary depending on the species and season. During the summer period, systematic watering is required to support growth and fruiting. In July-August, when fruits develop, half the water amount is essential.



## Light Requirements

Deciduous fruit trees thrive in sunny locations. Ample sunlight is essential for photosynthesis, growth, and producing high-quality fruits.

## Cold Tolerance

Most deciduous fruit trees prefer areas with cold winters and cool summers. They tolerate low winter temperatures and require many chilling hours to ensure good flowering and fruiting.

## Properties

Deciduous fruit trees are rich in nutrients, vitamins, antioxidants, flavonoids, and dietary fiber. These properties contribute to good health and strengthen the immune system.



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## Selected Deciduous Fruit Trees

### Apple Tree 'Anna' (*Malus domestica*)

- Soil Requirements: Various soil types with good drainage.
- Water Requirements: Systematic summer watering, especially in July-August.
- Light Requirements: Sunlight.
- Cold Tolerance: Tolerates cold climates, requires cool summer (20-21°C) and many chilling hours (800-1700 hours below 7°C).
- Properties: Rich in vitamins, antioxidants, and dietary fiber.
- Fruits: Medium-sized, green with red blush, ripen in August.

### Nectarine 'Early' (*Prunus persica* var. *Nucipersica*)

- Soil Requirements: Light to medium-textured, well-drained soil.
- Water Requirements: Rich summer watering.
- Light Requirements: Sunlight.
- Cold Tolerance: Tolerates low temperatures, requires rich winter and summer fertilization, strict winter pruning.
- Properties: Rich in vitamins, antioxidants, flavonoids, and dietary fiber.
- Fruits: Red with yellow flesh, ripen on May 20-30, self-pollinated.

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### Apricot 'Kaisi' (*Prunus armeniaca*)

- Soil Requirements: Light to medium-textured, well-drained soil.
- Water Requirements: Rich summer watering.
- Light Requirements: Sunlight.
- Cold Tolerance: Tolerates low winter temperatures, warm summer for high-quality fruits, moderate winter pruning.
- Properties: Rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, carotenoids, and dietary fiber.
- Fruits: Large-sized, slightly acidic, ripen mid-July.

### Peach 'Cypriot' (*Prunus persica*)

- Soil Requirements: Deep, well-drained soils, not high in calcium carbonate.
- Water Requirements: Increased water needs during endocarp hardening to fruit ripening.
- Light Requirements: Sunlight.
- Cold Tolerance: Temperatures below  $-2.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  are dangerous, areas with spring frosts are unsuitable, moderate chilling needs (900-1100 hours).
- Properties: Protects vision, promotes skin health, helps maintain weight, controls high cholesterol.
- Fruits: Medium-sized, yellow-green with red shades, juicy with sweet taste, ripen late June - early July.



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## Tribute to Berries and Blackberries: Cultivation and Care in Cyprus

Berries and blackberries are fruits of high nutritional value, rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and dietary fiber. These sweet and juicy fruits have gained great popularity in recent years due to their pleasant taste and numerous health benefits. In Cyprus, their cultivation is feasible and profitable, taking into account the island's climatic conditions.

### History and Origin

Berries and blackberries have been cultivated for centuries in Europe, North America, and Asia. Blackberries, for example, are widespread in Europe, while berries have deep roots in the traditions of Asia and the Mediterranean.

### Climatic Conditions in Cyprus

Cyprus is characterized by a Mediterranean climate, with hot and dry summers and mild, humid winters. Summer temperatures can reach 40°C, while winters are cooler, with average temperatures around 10°C-15°C. These conditions are favorable for cultivating berries and blackberries with the right care.



# Berry Cultivation in Cyprus Mulberries (*Morus* spp.)

**Mulberries** are known for their resilience and ability to adapt to various climatic conditions. In Cyprus, cultivating mulberries is quite easy, as the trees can withstand both the summer heat and the mild winter climate.

- **Varieties:** The most common mulberry varieties are white mulberry (*Morus alba*), black mulberry (*Morus nigra*), and red mulberry (*Morus rubra*). White mulberry is heat-resistant, while black mulberry produces sweeter and juicier fruits.
- **Soil:** Mulberries prefer light, well-drained soils. They tolerate various soil types but thrive in soils rich in organic matter.
- **Planting:** Planting is done in the fall or early spring. The trees should be planted in sunny locations to ensure good growth and fruit production.
- **Watering:** Although mulberries are drought-resistant, regular watering during the summer enhances fruiting.
- **Pruning:** Pruning is necessary to maintain the tree's shape and increase fruit production. It should be done every winter, removing old and weak branches.



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## Blackberry Cultivation in Cyprus Blackberries (*Rubus fruticosus*)

**Blackberries** are sensitive to drought but thrive well in Cyprus with proper care. They are plants that produce abundant fruit and can be successfully cultivated in gardens and farms.

- **Varieties:** There are many blackberry varieties, with the Thornless variety being popular due to the absence of thorns, making it easier to harvest.
- **Soil:** Blackberries require well-drained, acidic to neutral soil. Adding organic matter, such as compost, can improve soil structure and support plant growth.
- **Planting:** Planting is done in the fall or early spring. Blackberries should be planted in sunny locations, with enough space for the branches to spread.
- **Watering:** Blackberries need regular watering, especially during the summer months, to maintain soil moisture and prevent plant stress.
- **Pruning:** Pruning is important for removing old branches that have fruited and encouraging new growth. It should be done immediately after harvest.



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## Harvesting and Uses

- **Harvesting:** Berries and blackberries ripen gradually and are ready for harvest from late spring to early summer. Harvesting should be done carefully, as the fruits are delicate and can be damaged.
- **Uses:** Berries and blackberries are excellent for fresh consumption and making jams, desserts, and juices. They are rich in vitamin C, antioxidants, and dietary fiber, making them a healthy addition to the diet.



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