

## ***Winter to do list***

- Winter is a great time to prune most trees and shrubs other than spring flowering shrubs. Check for any damage to trees and shrubs and remove the broken or diseased branches first. Some trees like Magnolias and fruit trees are better pruned in the summer.
- If you've banded any of your trees or the City's street trees you'll need to remove the bands in mid-January. Tree bands left on too long can collect moisture and cause the bark to rot.
- Don't deadhead or cut back plants that will continue to look good right all through winter, such as ornamental grasses, seedheads on poppies and the cone-like centres of *Rudbeckia* flowers.
- *If the weather becomes cold again*, check that any slightly tender plants are protected by mulch or evergreen branches laid over them. Turn off outside taps and drain irrigation systems. Use sand or non-clumping Kitty litter to provide traction on icy paths and driveways. Try not to walk on frozen grass. If it snows, *gently dislodge accumulations of snow from your plants, especially broad-leaved evergreens. Do this before the snow becomes wet and heavy or freezes, and you'll minimize damage.*
- When weather permits, cut off the old leaves from Christmas roses and Lenten roses (*Hellebore x hybridus* and *H. orientalis*) being careful not to take off the flower buds, which may well be showing underneath them. Also cut back last year's foliage from St John's wort (*Hypericum calycinum*), and barren wort (*Epimedium*). Take any remaining leaves off rose bushes to prevent black spot spores going straight on to the new shoots.
- Prevent the rain, which carries peach leaf curl spores, from hitting the branches of your peach tree. One way to do this for wall-trained trees is to suspend a sheet of plastic over the tree from the eaves.

### **And some things to do inside...**

- clean and sharpen tools and give them a light coating of oil;
- clean pots and flats and purchase sterilized potting soil for seeds to be sown during the next few weeks. Sow geraniums and begonias as these grow very slowly, but hold off on sowing other annuals;
- list the flowers and vegetables that you would like to grow from seed then browse through the seed catalogues..