



## Winter Gardening Tips for a Healthier Plot

1. Remove old leaves and debris from all beds.
2. Prune roses and fruit trees such as apple, apricot and cherry. Cut off dead wood, branches that cross and thin, old and spindly wood to encourage as much fruit growth as possible.
3. Apply a layer of mulch around plants, leaving a clearance of several inches between mulch and the plant stems or trunks of the trees. Ideally, apply mulch to your garden twice a year. Mulch retains soil moisture, regulates soil temperature, suppresses weeds and contributes to soil replenishment and natural soil health. For these reasons, it's essential to apply mulch in colder months.
4. Schedule irrigation at a time that discourages fungal growth. Watering early in the morning means that fungus that prefer a dark, wet environment won't have the ability to grow. Also remember to stop irrigation during a storm.



### Wind-Proof Your Garden

We've experienced a few Santa Ana wind events, but more are sure to come. Coupled with the potential for wildfires, Santa Ana conditions also may present challenging growing conditions—even for experienced gardeners.



### Hazardous Chemicals Are Prohibited in the Garden Centers

The Laguna Woods Village Garden Centers follow **organic-only** gardening practices, and using hazardous chemicals is strictly prohibited. If you or your neighbor is using hazardous chemicals in your gardens, please promptly remove them and follow the instructions from the City of Laguna Woods for proper disposal (visit [bit.ly/3QVM9KC](https://bit.ly/3QVM9KC)).



## Cabbage Is Cool

Mark Twain once said “Cauliflower is nothing

but cabbage with a college education.” This humble vegetable is no longer viewed so poorly. We now know it’s rich with antioxidants and nutrients, and is a great addition to any garden. Cabbage is a cool-season vegetable suited to both spring and fall planting. See our cabbage growing guide with instructions on how to plant, grow and harvest this hardy, leafy vegetable. Check out this resource on planting cabbage:

- Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Cabbage ([almanac.com/plant/cabbage](http://almanac.com/plant/cabbage)) by Catherine Boeckmann



## Strengthen Seedlings With Chamomile Tea

Chamomile, similar to cinnamon, is known for its antifungal properties. Steeping a little chamomile tea and using it on seedlings helps prevent damping off disease that tends to crop up among new seedlings. Simply spray a little of the tea on your seedlings after transplanting them.

## Thank You From Garden Center Staff

Dear Gardeners,

The pandemic left everyone turned around, and it has been a challenge to get back our lives and, most importantly, back to doing the things we love—like gardening!

First, I want to thank everyone for all your amazing gardening. I am truly in awe as I walk around the centers. The beauty there invokes a peaceful ease and welcomes me to just be. It’s also a lot of fun watching everything blossom and grow!

Gardening is one of the things we are naturally drawn to because seeing life begin, grow and mature builds contentment, kindness, care and pride. Gardeners are a special breed of human who, by doing what they love, will always have a special place in everyone’s heart.

I hope that this message will inspire you to become bolder in creating yet more life, which will help foster a stronger bond of community between all gardeners.

If gardeners started at the outside of their plots by weeding pathways and trimming plants that reach through the fence, they could then relax and take their time to tend to what they really love—growing

produce. This approach prevents weeds from spreading their seeds and makes a lot less work.

Unfortunately, until everyone participates in keeping weeds at bay, they will simply do what they do best—spread. Also please remember that the wind does not play favorites, so you get to work harder in your own garden because of not clearing the weeds around your plot.

Staff has experimented in finding a safe and natural alternative to managing weeds. A solution of 45% undiluted vinegar, sprayed at the roots of weeds during the hottest time of day, will kill them in a couple hours, simplifying weed and root removal. This method, used weekly, prevents weeds from having a chance to establish themselves. However, vinegar at this strength will affect plants, too, so take care not to accidentally spray or mist them.

Again, thank you for your wonderful gardening and your willingness to consider your neighbors in every way.

Sincerely,  
Kristy Sakal, Garden Center Specialist



Garden Center Specialist Kristy Sakal