

ASK THE GARDENER!!!!!!!!!!!!

How To Make It Till January, Oh, Yes.... And Stay Sane!!!

Ladies, are you remembering my favorite adage? **No, not that one!** The one that reads...

Need a Helping Hand? Look at the End of YOUR Arm!

I know you are making lists. I do too. And what joy I do feel when I can cross through something, anything!

If you have put tropical plants outside that you want to save and winter over in the house, get those in immediately. Don't bother spraying the day lights out of them. How about waiting to see if you have pests. Tropical hibiscus – will drop leaves and get white flies, I promise. To control white flies, take a yellow piece of poster board, coat it with cooking oil and tuck around your plant. **Luckily you cannot hear their screams.** White flies love yellow. **What?** Cut all branches back 5" to 8." The leaves will re-sprout almost immediately.



Bat Conservation International membership makes a great gift.

Be sure to put all indoor plants up on saucers with wheels so they are up off your hard wood floors. You need air circulation all around the bottom of your plants so there is no moisture pulling up floor boards.

Put Garden To Bed – This sounds like a biggie but with the help of those lists and an occasional man, this can go quickly and then, yea! Cross it off your list.

- **Throw lots of chopped leaves into roses and butterfly bushes. Nightie night!**
- **I do not trim off seed heads in fall. Birds eat them all winter. Put it on the Spring List.**
- **No fall fertilizing. Fertilizing means "growth." Put it on the Spring List too.**
- **Bored? Study spade sharpening tutorials. You will Adore the results. Watch your toes!!!**
- **Last chance to plants trees and bushes, bulbs too – expect 75% off! My 95% off pines I planted in snow are now 25' tall. This can work for you too.**
- **Clear sprinkling systems and throw heater in the pond. Nightie night, fishes.**

Since this is the Manly Issue of Suburban Woman magazine...

Jobs For Men In the Garden:

Call the guy who... cleans the gutters
Call the guy who... hangs all the evergreen swags on our third floor
Call the guy who... delivers the wine.

Do Not Trim trees now, (we do that in February unless it is a flowering tree and then we trim it after it flowers) and quit using that tree trimming style where all you end up with is... The Trunk!!

Your Favorite Garden Consultant feels she must help you with your

Holiday Gifting even if You think she should stick to gardening.

An all time manly favorite... a Bat Conservation International membership. Believe me, the person who receives the BCI magazine four times a year with adorable bats on the cover (often showing a little snaggle tooth in a vampire-ish way) will never forget the fact that You gave him this subscription. Need a fancier gift? Do the BCI subscription AND buy a bat house from their online gift shop. Yes, a Bat House for our adorable and sometimes homeless Illinois bats. You won't believe—they eat 3,000 insects a night!!! Gotta love these guys.

Your gardening man, of course, LOVES tools. Because you love him, make sure he has good leather gloves for rough work, etc. Also make your executive man wear stretchy rubber palmed gloves for general stuff—no dirty nails, etc. These are really my faves for all purposes for men, women or me. The Dollar Store has them but only in the spring. They keep your hands dry And keep the stickers out of your skin.



a folding Japanese saw

One of my favorite tools and it will be his too—**A Japanese saw!** It can get in between little branches and cuts rapidly on the "pull" instead of the "push." Plus he'll like how he can swing it open like a butterfly knife or big switch blade. **Your Macho Man!!**

Along the same lines, there is a long telescoping saw and clippers unit that can be extended way into the tree. These can also be power units but do you really want to have a chain saw above your head on a pole? Probably not.

Another Favorite... Heifer International. Our donation gifts those in need with the ability to feed themselves and others and create a business for themselves. A gift of a chicken equates to dinner and eggs and chicks to sell others. A calf—dinner and milk for a lifetime, bees, bunnies, etc. **You can donate a whole "ark" in someone's honor.**

You Know I Love this Idea—Kay's pretty milkweed seed packets with butterfly weed seed in them. This is Not common milkweed, the tall, aggressive plant you might remember from childhood. Look up *asclepias tuberosa*. It can be broadcast on snow like grass seed. One hundred packets of these seeds are \$36 including shipping. Put them in holiday cards. Use as table favors at your next party.

My favorite kid's present—National Wildlife has the most gorgeous stuffed animals for adoptions for \$50. The kid gets a catalogue showing All the toys and then he gets to choose his favorite which comes with photos and information about his adoptee or ... Adopt A Manatee—started by Jimmy Buffet. This is an animal that most kids have never seen and basically is a huge blob/slug thing that eats lettuce and water hyacinths in Florida waterways. These adoptions also let you pick Brutus or Gloria or Nick and you get pictures and certificates of your favorite. So adorable on the kid's bulletin board. (SaveTheManatee.org)



Gardener Kay and her "Nick" Adoption Certificate

Last-Buy an amaryllis bulb. These things are huge and sure to delight anyone you need a little "something" for. The flower stalk grows an inch or so a day (Don't forget to measure it and keep a Growth Chart.) Then you are blessed with the most glorious of flower clusters. Stunning and you, the Present Giver, are unforgettable!

Questions? Monarch/Milkweed seed? Ideas? Thoughts? Email your favorite garden writer, Kay MacNeil kaymac60423@yahoo.com