



*The New Year comes with keepsakes from my garden. Evergreen boughs and pinecones and red berries cut from my yard fill pots outside my front door and on the patio beyond my kitchen window. The first blossoms of winter jasmine cast their yellow light on the waiting earth and the river birches lift their bare arms to the evening sky. The tulips and daffodils are safe in their beds and I light the wood stove in the den and lose myself in garden catalogs, and plan for the spring that is sure to come. Happy New Year everyone – and happy gardens.*

*~Irene*

## JANUARY 2012: In the Garden with Irene Virag

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> Happy 2012. My resolutions in and out of the garden: Weed out the clutter; smell the roses.	<b>2</b> Keep poinsettias and cyclamens in a cool room at night so their blooms last a little longer.	<b>3</b> Place a floating de-icer in the koi pond to keep the water flowing and the fish breathing.	<b>4</b> Stock bird feeders but keep them out of garden beds or seeds may germinate.	<b>5</b> Mark Twelfth Night by taking down the Christmas tree. Trim branches for mulch.	<b>6</b> Rotate houseplants 180 degrees every now and then so all sides get their time in the sun.	<b>7</b> Pot up more amaryllis bulbs and you'll be loving them by Valentine's Day.
<b>8</b> Curl up with your favorite seed catalogs and plot out your vegetable garden.	<b>9</b> Order or buy veggie seeds. Start getting ready: sterilize seed-starting containers.	<b>10</b> Send for annual flower seeds, too. They need 10 to 16 weeks indoors before going outside.	<b>11</b> Search out and destroy the buff-colored eggs of gypsy moths hiding in tree branches.	<b>12</b> Perk up potted herbs growing indoors with a splash of diluted liquid seaweed.	<b>13</b> Stay off the lawn and out of garden beds if the soil is frozen or if it's wet and soggy.	<b>14</b> Keep the compost pile watered so the contents break down during warm spells.
<b>15</b> Pamper your shrubs. Use sand or kitty litter on walkways instead of de-icing salts.	<b>16</b> Start shamrock seeds and they'll be wearing green in time for St. Patrick's Day.	<b>17</b> Dump forced paper whites when they finish blooming. They only put on one show.	<b>18</b> Make gardenias happy with lots of sunlight and humidity. Their fragrance is your reward.	<b>19</b> Check stored dahlias, cannas and gladiolas. If dry, sprinkle with water. Toss mushy ones.	<b>20</b> Give evergreens a drink of water if it hasn't rained or snowed. They get thirsty in winter, too.	<b>21</b> Deadhead miniature roses. Perk them up with time under grow lights and a sip of soluble fertilizer.
<b>22</b> Watch for winter thaws. Tuck in bulbs and perennials that lift out of the ground.	<b>23</b> Wash houseplants – but not African violets – with soapy water to banish mealy bugs.	<b>24</b> Shake or sweep snow from evergreens. Do it gently. But let ice melt away naturally.	<b>25</b> Prune berry bushes to encourage new growth and enhance fruit production.	<b>26</b> Prune deciduous trees. Remove dead or weak wood and any branches that cross others.	<b>27</b> Spray broadleaf evergreens with anti-desiccant as long as it's at least 40 degrees outside.	<b>28</b> Sow pansy seeds indoors. You can't have too many. Don't forget marigolds and begonias.
<b>29</b> Cut branches of witch hazel, forsythia, pussy willow, quince to force indoors for early spring.	<b>30</b> Jump start lettuce on a sunny window sill. You'll be tossing salads in no time.	<b>31</b> Start leeks and onions indoors. In 12 weeks, they'll be ready for their new garden digs.		<b>Click here to check out my Lowe's blog.</b>		<b>How does your garden grow? Tell me:</b> irene@irenevirag.com 1019 Ft. Salonga Rd. Suite 10 – # 302 Northport, NY 11768