

Landscape Maintenance Guide

**A Monthly Plan for landscaping in the
Southwest**

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Introduction

Welcome! I'm so glad to be able to share this maintenance guide with you. Week after week I speak with homeowners just like you who are committed to having a nice yard but overwhelmed with what to do and where to start. In this guide I've pulled together the frequently asked questions from homeowners about maintenance.

I want to put this all out on the table here in the beginning of this guide. I've said this before but gardening in the Southwest can be difficult and challenging. Most of us aren't from here so we're not really familiar with all the plants and we find ourselves under stress to conserve water. I don't want your lives to be overwhelmed with maintaining your landscape; I imagine you have other uses for your time. The goal of this guide is to simplify the overwhelming task of maintenance for you. These month by month sections show you the simplest tasks for that month.

Mistake #1: Nice yards are hard to maintain in this southwestern climate.

When we look at other people's awesome yards we assume, they must be out there all the time. You don't have the free time to be out there pulling weeds. How is that even possible?

Then you think...they must have a gardener. Yes, that's it.. they have someone taking care of their yard for them.

But that's not in your budget, so what are your options?

These thoughts ran through my head all the time, I thought it was impossible for me to have a low maintenance yard. Finally, I put those thoughts behind me and found a solution and now I can't believe I lived so long with that ugly yard. Get ready to dive into the maintenance guide and you will be on your way to the same clarity.

How is this guide organized?

This guide is divided into month by month sections from January to December. Each month has its own unique Design Tip with it. Following the monthly sections are in-depth sections specific to maintenance issues in the Southwest.



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What is maintenance?

From Merriam-webster: **Maintenance** it as the act of keeping property or equipment in good condition by making repairs, correcting problems, etc. upkeep (*Opposite: neglect, ignoring, disregard*)

From Wikipedia: **Landscape maintenance** (or *groundskeeping*) is the art and vocation of keeping a landscape healthy, clean, safe and attractive, typically in a garden, yard, park, institutional setting or estate. Using tools, supplies, knowledge, physical exertion and skills, a groundskeeper may plan or carry out annual plantings and harvestings, periodic weeding and fertilizing, other gardening, lawn care, snow removal, driveway and path maintenance, shrub pruning, topiary, lighting, fencing, swimming pool care, runoff drainage, and irrigation, and other jobs for protecting and improving the topsoil, plants, and garden accessories.



Figure 1: Typical tools used for landscape maintenance in the Southwest.



January

The holidays are over it's time to get refreshed and start anew.-Now don't freak out when I tell you this but there is NOT much to do in our Southwest January garden.

Therefore, **I'm giving everyone the month off of physical maintenance.** All of you in New Mexico wondering what you need to do this month in your actual garden. NOTHING. Yep, sit back relax, enjoy the New Year and let your yard soak up all that wonderful snow and rain. The big maintenance push of the year comes in February. So pour yourself another cup of coffee and enjoy all the free time I just gave you.



There is one thing to do but you can do it while sitting drinking your coffee! I'd like for you to **observe** your yard this month. Basically that means start looking at your yard and thinking about what you'd like to do this year.

Like any good gardener knows, it's not just what we put into the garden or how we tend it that makes it beautiful, it's how we PLAN for it. Below I will teach you how to make a Landscape Inventory. This inventory will include two categories: landscape maintenance items and future landscape wants.

Make a Landscape Inventory

A landscape inventory is literally a list of tasks, ideas and thoughts you have about your yard. The point is to capture those tasks and ideas on paper so you can schedule out when you'll get the tasks done. I like to capture tasks for both maintenance and future landscape wishes. For instance, some maintenance tasks might need to be done before Spring and the landscape wishes will be those items you'll want to plan for as the spring and summer come around.

Here is what you need to get started:

- ☐ a piece of paper and a pencil or pen.
- ☐ An aerial image of your yard. (optional) This can be useful in helping you visualize the spaces in your backyard. To get a FREE aerial image of your yard go to Google Earth (<http://www.google.com/earth/>). Type in your address, zoom into your house then print out a screen shot of it.



1. With paper or aerial image in hand, go **OBSERVE** your yard from both inside and out. While observing think about the following questions related to maintenance and future landscape wants.

Maintenance: Maintenance items are those tasks we need to do in your yard in order to prepare for Spring. This may include clean up, pruning, and weed management.

For example, when I look at my yard, I see the fall leaves, new sprouts with the spent flowers from last year. Take note of the types of spaces your yard is made up of. Break your yard into different spaces. You can even label them to help you remember. Then list out what maintenance tasks need to be done for each space.

Future Landscape wishes: What do you see? How does it make you feel to think about this space come spring? What shapes, colors and textures are interesting? How do you use this space? How often does it get sunlight? Is it close to a water source? What would you like to see in this space.

2. Draw it out and write it out. As architects we draw things from a top down perspective, this is sometimes called a site plan, birds eye view, or aerial image. I'd like for you to do the same thing on your piece of paper or aerial image. Take a minute to think about all your spaces of your yard. For instance, you might have a patio space, vegetable garden space, lawn space, and playground space.

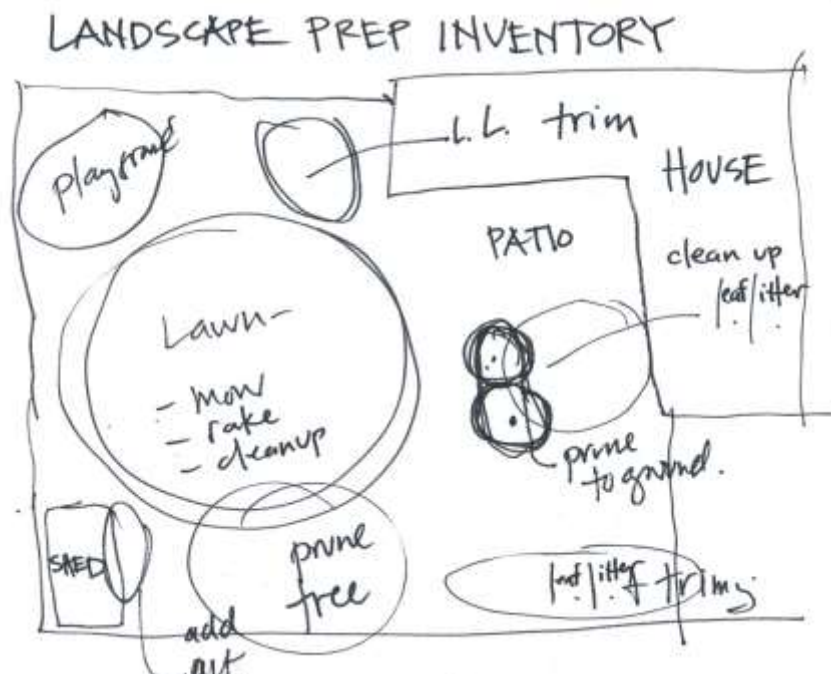
With your list of spaces in hand draw a circle to represent each of the spaces you have in your yard. Use big circles for large spaces like a grass lawn and little circles for smaller spaces like a veggie garden. Arrange the circles as they relate to each other. You can make them touch if the spaces are next to each other or draw a line from one circle to another to represent a pathway between two spaces.

The objective is to begin to see your spaces in relationship to each other. You can even name the spaces. Now write down in each circle the name of the space and both the maintenance tasks and future landscape wants.

Once you have a clear idea of the spaces and tasks in your yard we will be able to prep each

one accordingly for spring and the rest of the year.

Here is an example of what that sketch could look like. This one is my list of maintenance tasks that need to get done before Spring.





Big things to do this month:

- ☐ **Make a Landscape Inventory**
- ☐ **Watering:** Water plants one time this month including trees, shrubs and those dormant perennials. If it has rained more than 1/2" or snowed more than 6" during the month you can skip the watering step.
- ☐ **Pruning:** We will prune in February so just make note of trees, shrubs and perennials that need to be pruned on your landscape inventory.
- ☐ **Compost:** The compost pile is dormant this month.

Design Tip:



During the winter months in colder climates, plants fade and hardscape elements often become the focus of the landscape. To counter this, incorporate local materials that take center stage when plants disappear. Garden walls, gates, gravel mulches, paving, boulders, and decorative concrete finishes are examples of hardscape elements that can create structure, and add color and texture to your garden.

If you are a planner like me then you're looking ahead to February cause you recall this is when we should prune.

Of course, if you have more time and want to do more for your yard this month then you can start planning your vegetable garden. In fact, now is when all those vegetable seed catalogs come out.



February

You may not know this but February is the month when I do about 70% of my gardening tasks for the year. Yep. It's a big garden month for me.

Last month we did our Landscape Inventory. Personally, I love winter so I'm not in a rush for spring but there's no harm in dreaming. If you haven't already, jump over to [Google Earth](#) and get an aerial image of your yard and complete your landscape inventory.

Since I don't do any leaf raking in the fall, garden cleanup can be laborious come February. In fact I typically get about 11 bags of green garden waste this time of year. Below I go over what I do to prepare my yard for Spring.

My biggest task is raking. I use my wire rake to clean up leaves and debris around all perennial beds, shrubs, and native grass lawns. After saving about 4 bags of debris for my compost, the rest is bagged and put aside for my City Spring Green Waste Pick-up. (FYI: the ABQ Green waste pickup will be the first two weeks in May on your regular garbage pick up day. Check for specific listings in your city.)



After I rake, I take out my blower. I use this to blow out any hard to reach leaves, debris, and dirt around my patio, plants and any gravel areas. I then pile up that debris and bag it. I like to use the collapsible yard bin to help me bag. It's lightweight, doesn't take up any room and it fits those big black yard bags perfectly. (See more in the tools section page 29)

If you suffer from allergies, this type of cleanup work in your yard can be miserable. I recommend doing this task on a low pollen day and wearing a protective mask to lessen the intensity of all the dust, debris and pollen. For other tasks see the list below.

Big things to do this month:

- ☐ **Cleanup:** Yard cleanup as noted in the section above.
- ☐ **Watering:** Up the watering to 2-3 times per month. You may or may not have to water depending on the rainfall/snowfall this month.
- ☐ **Pruning:** Let's prune. Prune trees and shrubs when the temperature is above freezing. Cut out dead, diseased and crossing branches first; then prune to shape. Prune pomegranate, wisteria, summer blooming spireas, and nandina. Shrubs like Chamisa,



butterfly bush, Russian sage, and ornamental grasses (except blue fescue) can be pruned almost to the ground. DO NOT prune spring flowering ornamentals or grapes and roses yet. More pruning tips can be found 505outside.com/help-my-trees-need-pruning/

- ❑ **Compost:** Turn your compost pile, lightly dress with your maintenance leaf litter. Keep it watered this month. A tip is to fill your kitchen compost bin with water before you empty it into the outside compost.
- ❑ **Vegetables:** If you planted cool season vegetables last fall you can remove the frost cover or cold frame slightly on warm sunny days.
- ❑ **Treatments:** In late February, apply a pre-emergent to anywhere you don't want seeds to sprout. Use the organic corn gluten based one. This is perfect for grass lawns, even native ones. Apply a dormant oil spray to deciduous trees and shrubs to kill overwintering insects, eggs and larvae. Use a strong spray on your hose to wash down evergreens. (see full details on pre-emergents in section page 22)
- ❑ **Remove:** Mustards plants will start appearing in mid-February, remove them promptly before they flower and re-seed. You can remove them with a hula hoe. (learn what a hula hoe is in section page 23) This time of year you will see the winter weeds popping up you can prevent these by doing pre-emergents in the fall. (see full details on pre-emergents in section page 22).

Design Tip

Are my plants dead? This is one of the most popular questions I get during the winter months. Winters can be hard on plants and yes at times it does appear like our plants are dead.

Don't let them fool you, the plants are resting and will be back in spring. This is one reason I like to "tuck" my plants in for the winter with a covering of leaves. Aside from making them cozy, the leaf cover reminds me that they are dormant and that I need not worry about them.





March

March can be unpredictable with deep freezes, snow, and bright sunny warm days. When those warm days come, I start wondering about my plants. I sometimes peak under the mulch to see if anything green is starting to come up.

There is not a whole lot to do this month except finish your clean up, pruning and continue to pull weeds. This is a fun month to start working on small hardscape projects in your backyard so go back to your landscape inventory and see if you can start on some of those future landscape tasks you noted.

Big things to do this month:

- ☐ **Cleaning:** Finish cleaning your garden beds.
- ☐ **Watering:** Increase the watering to 3-4 times per month. You may or may not have to water depending on the rainfall/snowfall this month.
- ☐ **Pruning:** Finish pruning trees and summer-flowering shrubs. Roses and grape vines can be pruned late in the season. Raspberries and other fruit bramble shrubs can be pruned except for “Heritage” raspberries; those are pruned in the fall.
- ☐ **Compost:** Empty and sift your winter compost, then set aside for placement in beds. Leave sitting for another month so as not to burn your plants, compost will still be high in nitrogen. Amend the soil around your trees with compost, this acts as a natural fertilizer.
- ☐ **Vegetables:** If you planted cool season vegetables last fall you can remove the frost cover or cold frame slightly on warm sunny days. Start seeding or transplanting salad greens and cooking greens. Plant seeds of cool season growers: radishes, carrots, beets, turnips, onions, kohlrabi, parsnips and peas.
- ☐ **Remove:** Continue to remove weeds as they appear and before they re-seed.
- ☐ **Planting:** Perennials can start to be planted now, but use caution because there is still the chance of freezing.

Design Tips:



Create year-round interest in your garden.

- Plant complimentary colors together – yellow/purple, red/green, blue/orange
- Incorporate plant combinations that bloom during different times of the year.
- Plant a variety of foliage types and diverse textures.



April

April is an exciting time in the landscape because it's planting time. This is the month most of us have been waiting for. This is when we all rush off to the local nurseries and grab plants. (see Plant Nurseries in Abq page 35). I must caution you that before you spend money on plants review your Landscape Inventory list again. You spent a lot of time putting that list together, now is a good time to check to make sure you are accomplishing the tasks you wrote down.

Big things to do this month:

- ☐ **Watering:** Continue watering 3-4 times per month, especially any newly planted plants and transplants. Now that the chance of freezing is behind us, check your irrigation. Examine your controllers, valves, bubblers, spray and emitter heads, to be sure everything is working. You can also hire an irrigation contractor to get it all working for you. Check with your local irrigation supply store, they will have a list of contractors who do this type of work.
- ☐ **Pruning:** Be sure that you are finished pruning roses and grapes by mid-April.
- ☐ **Vegetables:** It's time to prepare your soil for your vegetables. Remove debris and spread compost and manure and gently loosen up the soil with a pitchfork. If you are a risk taker you may try setting out tomatoes, peppers and eggplants but be sure to watch the weather for frost and protect as needed. Strawberries may be planted at any time during the month. Plant raspberries, grapes, and asparagus.
- ☐ **Planting:** Go ahead and plant! Now is the perfect time to get perennials into the ground before it gets too hot.

Design Tips:

Create a rock garden and bring diversity and year-round interest into urban landscapes.



- Select an area that receives sun at least half of the day.
- Outline a desired shape with rock on the ground.
- Fill shape with planting mix.
- Add rock and planting mix to create subsequent layers. Add adequate planting medium for root protection and growth under rocks.
- Place rocks carefully to ensure stability.
- Select plants that are low-growing and can creep in and around rock crevasses.
- Incorporate plants that are considerably smaller than rocks such as Woolly Yarrow (*Achillea tomentosa*), Pineleaf Penstemon (*p. pinifolius*), germander (*Teucrium* sp.), Snow-in-Summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*), succulents (like iceplant shown in this picture), and sedums.



May

May is pretty much one of the best months to enjoy the outdoors in the Southwest. So aside from a few tasks here or there your job this month is to just enjoy your yard. Spend time eating outdoors, perhaps read a book in your backyard, chat with the neighbors on your front porch. Enjoy all the loveliness your yard has to offer this month.

Big things to do this month:

- ❑ **Watering:** You can water twice a week now. For the plants you just planted in April and May you can spot water them daily. Roots should take after about 2 weeks. Try tugging on the plant gently to see if the roots have taken. If so, you can go to watering 3 times a week. Remember to check all your irrigation parts and pieces this month. This will ensure efficient water use throughout the summer.
- ❑ **Mulching:** Be sure to check that all your plants have at least 2-3" of mulch around them. Mulch will help retain the moisture directly underneath the plant so the roots stay wet longer. I recommend shredded organic mulch you can also add about 1-2" of compost to garden beds. (see more on mulching in section page 30)
- ❑ **Pruning:** Prune small following shrubs as they finish blooming if you'd like. Cut back or pinch the buds of any chrysanthemum plants to encourage larger, bushier plants and blooms in the fall.
- ❑ **Vegetables:** Tomatoes are by far the best veggie for Albuquerque. If you would like to try veggie gardening this year try tomatoes. Mid to late May is the best time to plant to prevent damage from frost. Choose a 12" or taller plant, remove lower leaves, and lay the plant in the hole with some of the stem in the hole.
- ❑ **Planting:** There are lots of plant sales this month. Get planting! (see the nursery section page 35) For a bright and colorful bloom display from August to the first hard frost; plant sunflowers, cosmos, marigolds, salvia, and zinnias.

Design Tips:



Pathways provide structure and access to the landscape.

- Pathways lead you in, move you around and steer you to a destination such as a water feature or sitting area.
- Curve the pathway behind tall shrubs or to an alcove that is out of sight to create mystery.
- For informal pathways consider the use of crusher fines, mulch or gravel. These may be as narrow as 18".
- For formal pathways consider the use of brick, pavers or concrete. If used frequently make it at least 3' wide.



June

Summer has arrived and with that comes long hot days and kiddos out of school! Make sure you're following the garden tips below so you'll have more time to play with those kiddos and keep enjoying all that time outdoors. This month is when we start to notice the shady areas of our yard and perhaps areas where we'd like to add shade.

A little note about our Southwest climate and these hot days. Desert plants are use to large swings in temperatures and variations in water. Our dryland plants typically weather through this. To help them along I recommend you irrigate them very deeply. This encourages the plant to root deep into the ground where it is cooler and the plant can retain moisture longer. Watering deeply means distributing water via a very slow drip but for a long period of time. You could water an hour for trees and ten minutes for established shrubs three times a week.

If you are thinking about installing rain barrels, now is the time to prepare for the coming monsoon season. They can be used to collect and/or re-direct water from canales to where it's most needed. Thoughtfully planned water harvesting can reduce overall water usage.

Big things to do this month:

- ❑ **Fertilize:** I'm not a big fertilizer person because I truly aim to have a low maintenance yard. But some yards come with plants that do like a little fertilizer every now and then. Fertilize roses to encourage the next flush of blooms. Use nitrogen fertilizer on warm-season grasses, like Bermuda. An organic alternative is compost, compost tea or fish emulsion.
- ❑ **Pruning:** If you want, continue pruning shrubs that have finished spring flowering. Remove unwanted growth now so that you won't remove next spring's blooms (which form on this year's new growth). Continue dead-heading as flowers fade. (pinch back mums near the end of the month.)
- ❑ **Vegetable Garden:** Continue seeding and setting out plants that love warm soil such as basil, corn, and beans. Melons, tomatoes, eggplant and peppers should go in by mid-month so there is enough time to make a crop. After June 20th you can plant cauliflower and broccoli seeds for a fall crop. Hanging a shade fabric over vegetable rows helps reduce evaporation, reduces insect problems and increases production.
- ❑ **Mulch:** One of the most critical things we can do is to keep our plants from drying out. The way to do this is with mulch. Check last month's section on mulch.
- ❑ **Watering:** You should be watering 3 times a week this month but remember to water all plants deeply and to water in the evening. Generally, water established trees and shrubs every 10 to 14 days deeply. Water established beds weekly. Remember native and adapted plants are meant to withstand these intense temperatures so don't fret if they look a little dry this week. Deep watering means long slow watering until the soil is wet to a depth of 18-24" when measured 24 hrs after watering.
- ❑ **New Plantings:** If you have recently installed new plants or seedlings you'll need to water more regularly, at least two times per day to help get the plant through the intense heat during the first few weeks of establishment. I have to do this with new grass plugs I've installed. I water first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening. You can cut back on watering in September when our temperatures start to drop here in the Southwest.
- ❑ **Compost:** This is a good time to wet and turn your compost.



Design Tips:



Container gardening adds seasonal variety and brings in the colors your missing from your yard. Container gardens provide annual color to landscapes between perennial bloom cycles.

- Use sculptural evergreen plants such as Agave, Yucca, and topiary juniper to provide winter interest.
- Branches and other decorative items arranged in containers add year-round interest.
- Containers provide planting space in small areas such as courtyards and balconies.
- Experimenting with new plant combinations in containers won't bust the budget.
- Use plants in containers that are hard to control if planted in a bed, such as Bamboo, Virginia Creeper, Mint and Mexican Evening Primrose.
- Most container gardens can be mobile- move them around based on your needs. Front patio for a neighborhood meet and great and backyard for an outdoor dinner.



July

July is a hot month, I don't really want you working much this month in your garden. In fact, just pour a glass of iced tea and relax in your hammock with a great book. While you are out there enjoying your yard, take note of the areas that you do not visit. There are probably two reasons you don't visit that spot in your yard. One is that there isn't much blooming this time of year, take note of that and think about a July blooming plant you can plant this fall so next year it'll be filled in.

Another reason people don't use certain areas of their yards is because it's too hot this time of year. Why not plan for some shade in that area for next year. There are a few basic ways you can get instant shade; buy an umbrella or shade sail, or plant a tree in the fall that will provide shade next summer. You can always build a permanent shade structure, I am loving the new adjustable louvered structures from Solara.

Big things to do this month:

- ❑ **Watering:** We are still watering 3 times a week this month but remember to water all plants deeply and to water in the evening. Generally, water established trees and shrubs every 10 to 14 days deeply. Water established beds weekly. July is even hotter so every few days walk around the garden and check your plants to see how they are fairing in the hot weather. Container plants may need to be watered 2 times a day to keep them from drying out. If you don't have an irrigation system now is a good time to think about how you could plan one in for next year's hot season. It will save you time, conserve water and keep your plants happy
- ❑ **Remove:** Now is the time we start to get those summer weeds. Remove them promptly. Try using a hula hoe to make the chore easier (see page 23 to learn more). Mark down where you see the most weeds. Try some of the weed management techniques to prevent them from coming next year. (See page 22 to learn more)
- ❑ **Pests:** Now is typically the time we may notice pests in our gardens. This is when I recommend calling the Master Gardeners Hotline. (505) 292-7144 or (505) 243-1386. You can also bring a sample of your diseased plant or pest to the Plant Pharmacy at Osuna Nursery.

Design Tips:



Stay cool with the gurgling sounds of a water feature this month.

- The sound of trickling, gurgling, and running water masks background noise.
- Water reflects and extends beautiful patterns and colors throughout the landscape.
- Whether large or small, formal or informal, water features create a focal point.
- Water features provide evaporative cooling when wind moves across them.
- Water features provide wildlife habitat.



August

While August is a pretty hot month it's typically our wettest month of the year. The rainfall is a welcome relief from the hot temperatures of the past two months.

Big things to do this month:

- ❑ **Watering:** We are still watering 3 times a week this month but remember to water all plants deeply and to water in the evening. Generally, water established trees and shrubs every 10 to 14 days deeply. Water established beds weekly. Container plants may need to be watered 2 times a day to keep them from drying out.
- ❑ **Remove:** Continue promptly pulling weeds, the easiest time to pull them is after a rain. Try using a hula hoe to make the chore easier (see page 23 to learn more). Mark down where you see the most weeds. Try some of the weed management techniques to prevent them from coming next year. (See page 22 to learn more)
- ❑ **Pests:** You may still be noticing pests in your yard, if they are bothering you you'll want to get some advice by calling the Master Gardeners Hotline. (505) 292-7144 or (505) 243-1386. You can also bring a sample of your diseased plant or pest to the Plant Pharmacy at Osuna Nursery.
- ❑ **Compost:** Check the compost, it's time to turn it and check that it is still moist. The more you keep it consistently wet during the hot months the faster it will compost down. You might be able to use this compost by November.

Design Tips:



Usually in August the monsoon season is in full force. two weeks straight of rain! Make sure you're directing all the water away from the house and towards your garden. Use cobble to create a swale for the plants. Then add a rain chain to help direct the water.

Harvesting rainwater that falls on homes and yards reduces our dependence on dwindling groundwater reserves. Keeping rainwater on site rather than sending it to storm drains increases the availability of water for plants and reduces potential flooding and erosion.

Rainwater may be captured passively and actively. Passive water harvesting involves capturing water from rooftops, sidewalks, driveways, and their

hardscape areas and directing it to plants by using swales (shallow ditches), berms, and basins. Active water harvesting typically involves more complex water capture and delivery systems by using tanks, cisterns, pipes and gravity-fed or electric pumps.



September

Like May, September is one of those months you'll want to spend every day enjoying your yard. Many Plants are in bloom, the evenings are cool and crisp, and there is not much to do in the garden.

This is the time of year to dig out your Landscape Inventory from January and see how far you've come on your tasks. Take a look at your garden and see what areas you'd like to adjust nurseries will have sales in October.

Big things to do this month:

- ❑ **Watering:** Adjust your watering schedule for rainy weather. You can drop watering down to two times a week. Add mulch where plants are drying out too quickly. Continue to water established trees and shrubs every 10 to 14 days deeply. Vegetable gardens should be watered at least 2-3x per week during this heavy production month.
- ❑ **Pruning:** Prune honeysuckle when it finishes blooming. There's no longer the need to pinch back mums. You may trim evergreen and hedge type plants lightly now.
- ❑ **Remove:** Remove weeds on a daily basis especially after a good rain.
- ❑ **Planting:** Now is a good time to start adding pansies, and violas to your container pots.
- ❑ **Treatments:** In early September, apply a pre-emergent to anywhere you don't want weed seeds to sprout. Use the organic corn gluten based one or a chemical one. This is perfect for grass lawns, even native ones. Apply a dormant oil spray to deciduous trees and shrubs to kill over-wintering insects, eggs and larvae. Use a strong spray on your hose to wash down evergreens. (see full details on pre-emergents on page 22)

Design Tips:

Edible landscapes create more sustainable and livable cities.



Growing food in urban environments can be done in spaces ranging from rooftops to community gardens, vacant lots, city parks, alleyways, and dedicated urban farms. When we produce, sell and purchase locally-grown food, we invigorate a collective sense of community and boost the local economy. In addition, urban edible landscapes provide access to fresh produce and reduce pollution associated with transportation and storage, thereby lessening global environmental impacts. Besides, edible plants are beautiful.



October

Temperatures are dropping this month and now is a great time to start up the outdoor fire pit to stretch the evenings. The native and ornamental grasses are in full grandeur along with the beautiful wildflowers in the foothills and mountains.

Big things to do this month:

- ☐ **Pruning:** Lightly prune pyracantha but be sure to leave the berries for the birds. You might be wanting to prune your chamisa, apache plume and other large shrubs. Hold off on this until mid winter.
- ☐ **Watering:** Hold off on watering trees until after the first frost. Then water deeply. Adjust your irrigation systems to water later in the day due to chances of frost.
- ☐ **Planting:** Divide perennials now to share with friends. Carefully dig up their roots and replant with compost and mulch for the winter. It's a great time to plant your bulbs. Most nurseries have them in stock now. Seed wildflower gardens now for next Spring. For your pots, plant pansies, ornamental cole crops like kale and cabbage. They will provide color for another few months. Don't forget to stock up on perennials on sale and get these in the ground. I might have overdone it this year.
- ☐ **Remove:** Continue to remove fall weeds before they go to seed. Also clean up fruit and vegetable debris from below plants to reduce bug population.

Design Tips:

Create wildlife habitat in your garden by using native plants.



Native plants are adapted to local soil, rainfall, and climatic conditions.

Native plants have natural defenses to many insects and disease.

Native plants will grow with minimal water, fertilizers, and pesticides.

Use plants together as they would be found in the wild (known as plant communities).

Choose plants that fruit or bloom during different times of the year to provide wildlife food sources year-round.

Provide a simple water source such as a bird bath or pond.

Leave seedheads on plants through the winter to provide a food source as well as winter interest.



November

It's that time of year, the leaves are falling and you're going to need to do something with them if only just to get them off your walkway. This is my second busiest maintenance month. It's when I do all my winter preparations.

Let falling leaves lie is my mantra. I typically pick up the leaves on my grass, sidewalks and patios but I'll let the ones on my planting beds remain. I like to tuck plants into bed for the season. Keep your plants cozy this winter by tucking them in with fallen leaves. Simply rake all your leaves onto your perennial and shrub beds. Be sure to save a few bins full of leaves for your compost pile.

Big things to do this month:

- ☐ **Mulching:** Check to make sure your perennials and tender (soft leafed shrubs) are mulched. Pile up leaves from the Fall, discarded Christmas-tree boughs and evergreen pruning's on top of perennial and shrub beds. Hay straw (weed free) and pine needles will also work.
- ☐ **Watering:** Deeply water all your trees and shrubs once this month.
- ☐ **Rain Barrels:** Freezing temps can ice these guys up and cause damage to the containers and the valves. Make sure the water is not over 3/4 of the way up.
- ☐ **Hoses:** Assess all your hoses and check for cracks and leaks, then empty them of all water. Store any unnecessary hoses in a protective place out of the sun over the winter.
- ☐ **Wood Furniture:** Store small pieces in protective areas, out of the elements. Larger pieces can be protected with covers. If that is not an option you can also reseal them. Just make sure you check the temperatures on the sealant to be sure you are within the temperature window.
- ☐ **Compost:** Wet and turn your compost bin before the freezing temperatures freeze up your top layer.
- ☐ **Water Features:** Winterize all water features as per your particular feature. Remember to drain all tubes and hoses of water.
- ☐ **Garden decor:** Pillows, Outdoor rugs and Solar lights. Store the pillows and outdoor rugs for the season. This will protect them so they last longer. Clean off all your solar lights, keep the ones out you use the most. You might need to relocate to an area that receives more sun.
- ☐ **Garden tools:** Clean and prep your garden tools so they are ready for the spring. Use soap and water to remove dirt and dried on materials. Scrape off clumps with a wire brush however don't use wire brushes on painted surfaces. Sharpen (with a file or whetstone) and oil (with linseed oil) your sheers, hand tools, and wooden handles. Lubricate your hinged pruning tools with motor oil or WD-40. Store tools metal side down in a bucket filled with sand and motor oil. This will prevent rusting over winter, especial in humid places. Don't forget to properly clean out your lawnmowers and trimmers. Remove all grass from blades and have them professionally sharpened now before the spring rush. No motor oil, then you can wipe down tools with beeswax or mineral oil and store.



- ❑ **Veggie garden:** Depending on if you are planting this Winter, veggie garden prep can be as simple as removing old plants and topping garden with a 8" layer of leaves {or 4" of wood mulch}. If you'd like to plant, drop in some garlic {it's easy}.

Design Tips:

Gardens are living works of art; incorporate sculpture as a focal point.



Use materials that will patina over time such as wrought iron or copper.

Include art with a landscape inspired theme.

Borrow garden themes from other cultures such as zen and meditation gardens.

Use what you have a brass headboard found in your attic could add new definition to a planting bed.

Be creative and let your imagination soar!



December

The weather starts to get pretty cold this time of year. There is not much to do in your garden this month, keep things simple and just enjoy the holiday month. I like to plant indoor Amaryllis and paperwhite Narcissus bulbs to brighten the house for the holidays. If you start them at the beginning of the month they'll be ready for Christmas. Start them in the middle of November and you'll have some fun garden gifts to hand out.

Big things to do this month:

- ☐ **Plant Decor:** Decorate with PRUNINGS from your garden. Anything with berries or dried seed heads will look great.
- ☐ **Watering:** Deeply water plants one time this month including trees, shrubs and those dormant perennials. If it has rained during the month you can skip the watering step.

Design Tips:



Need more kitchen scraps, set up a composting pail at yours or your spouses office and watch the scraps pile up. Be sure to include a small sign telling folks what to put in the pail.



In depth Maintenance Section

This section lists out the typical maintenance issues that come up in your average Southwest landscape. These are also some of the most frequently asked questions over at My Landscape Coach.

We'll be covering the following topics:

- Weed Management
- Pruning
- Tools
- Mulch
- Composting
- Siberian Elm Removal
- Plant nurseries in Albuquerque
- Other

Weed Management

The most popular question I get asked is how do I deal with my weeds? There are many methods to tackle weeds in your yard. I like to break them up into two categories. *Weed Abatement* and *Weed Prevention*.

Weed Abatement

Weed Abatement is the act of getting rid of weeds immediately.

1. Kill weeds with kindness. DON'T douse them with **chemicals**! I know it *might* sound easier, but once the weeds die from those terrible chemicals, you still have to pull and bag the dead waste. Instead, **pull them by hand**. I know, I know, that's not the answer you were hoping for, but yanking them — roots and all — is by far the best way to rid yourself of those suckers.
2. Prevent weeds with layers. Weeds thrive in bare dirt, so let's take away their habitat by creating *layers*. You choose what's right for your yard. **Install organic mulch**. Mulch (*noun*) *a covering, as of straw, compost, or permeable sheeting, spread on the ground around plants to prevent excessive evaporation or erosion, enrich the soil, inhibit weed growth, etc.* Put at least 3" of a mulch layer on top of the dirt. This may be shredded wood chips (organic mulch), pine needles, or leaves.
3. One foolproof way to never get weeds again is to overplant. Weeds don't grow where other plants are already growing, so the **more you plant**, the *fewer* weeds you'll have. With a little more initial effort through design and planting, you'll benefit later with a weed free yard.

Three simple ways to eliminate weeds any time, any day:

1. Set aside 5 minutes a day to weed. It's therapeutic.
2. Pull weeds after a rain; they come out like butter. For the most stubborn weeds, try using your



bare hands for a better grip.

3. If they still don't budge, dig around the base with a weed tool and pop them out.

Remember: weeds are in the eye of the beholder. For years I've pulled the weed commonly called London Rocket (*Sisymbrium Irio*) every spring; in fact, it was my nemesis. A few springs ago when I was studying permaculture, my class had a potluck and low and behold someone brought a salad that included leaves from the London Rocket. I still remember gasping at the sight of it. Turns out it is edible and instead of tossing them into the trash I could have been tossing them in a salad.

Tools for getting rid of weeds

Tool #1: Have you heard of a HULA HOE? The Hula Hoe is a great tool that allows you to gently pull up the weeds and their roots easily.

Tool #2: The hand weeder. We all have them, but do we actually use them correctly? These tools aid you in pulling weeds that have a deep taproot. {Weeds like that edible London Rocket}. You will want to dig the tool.

Tool #3: The WIRE rake. In general this is a must-have tool for all types of gardening jobs. It is the perfect tool for cleaning up those weeds you've just pulled.

Tool #4: The Collapsible Leaf Bag—a great freestanding bin that allows you to easily pop in a plastic yard bag. Or try a Lawn and Leaf Paper bag for a more compost-able solution. You are now armed and ready with the right tools to remove weeds.



Weed Prevention

Have you ever driven across the City and wondered why the parks are weed free yet your yard seems to be their breeding ground? The City has a specific management plan for the parks. And so can us homeowners.

When we approach the idea of creating a management plan we think about how the actions we put forth today will benefit us at this moment and in the future. It is an upfront investment for the future of your yard. Meaning, put in the time and money now and reap the benefit in the future. With weed management it takes an average of 3 years to really get the problem under control.

Learn more about weeds and weed identification here: <https://mylandscapecoach.com/eliminate-weeds-from-your-yard/>



One of the best prevention methods is to apply a pre-emergent on your landscape certain times of the year to prevent weeds from sprouting.

Pre-emergent

1. *Use a pre-emergent on your lawn grasses in February or early March. (typically, the best time is when the yellow forsythia is blooming.)*

This is typically a spray or granular material that prevents weed seed germination therefore addressing the problem at the seeds. To keep it simple, there are two basic types of pre-emergent. Below I list the pro's and con's of each.

ORGANIC CORN GLUTEN Concern Weed Prevention Plus pre-emergent, it is a natural product using corn gluten meal to create a weed prevention fertilizer.

Pros: Very safe organic material for use around kids and animals. Adds some beneficial fertilizer to the lawn.

Cons: Price per square foot of yard is expensive. You must apply a very HIGH rate of the granulates thus making your yard look like it just sleeted in order to get results. Less effective than other pre-emergents so you will need to follow up with hand pulling and spot treating.

CHEMICAL Fertilome For all Seasons II Lawn food plus crabgrass and weed preventer.

Pros: Very affordable for taking care of large areas of turf grass. Extremely effective. If you want to be done with weeds in your lawn this year then this is the one for you.

Cons: It is a chemical treatment and you must take the necessary precautions around kids and animals. Follow the labels as directed.

It is important to read the directions and labels very carefully. I spread both products by hand broadcasting per the recommended quantity as per directions on the bag. Wet the area where you distributed the pre-emergent then wait until Spring.



Pruning

Why do we prune?

1. To maintain the health of your plants.
2. To direct growth
3. To remove undesirable growth
4. To increase quality or yield of flowers or fruit.
5. To maintain safety
6. To create hedges or topiary

Pruning sounds daunting because we're all worried we're going to mess something up. I always find if I arm myself with the knowledge then I'm more adapt to take the first step.

DECIDUOUS TREES: These trees are dormant during winter months so this is a great time to prune them. Prune trees as long as the tree is still dormant and there are no buds or growth on the plant. [For pruning large trees, check out this video.](#) If you have a home orchard you'll want to [visit this post](#) for specific information. Wait to prune **EVERGREEN TREES** until new growth begins to emerge.

SHRUBS: February is when I prune all my shrubs, but many folk say to wait until all danger of frost has past. But since I've got limited time this is the time of year I do my maintenance month so I just go for it. However, wait until mid march if you are concerned. Prune out all stems that were killed or damaged by frost, cut back the stem to just above the new growth. Prune seed heads off shrubs (like fernbush, apache plume) right under the spent flowers. Now is a great time to prune chamisa to the ground. I typically prune about 8" from the ground.

PERENNIALS: Again with perennials many folk wait until March to prune to allow one more month of protective mulch cover to collect and hold moisture. Remember those old flower stems, and seed heads on your plants left on for the birds, it's time to trim those up. Sometimes using a hand pruner is best and other times I find a wire rake will release many of the spent stems quickly and gently. See what works best for you. You'll start to notice some greenery poking out. This sight makes me happy.



ORNAMENTAL GRASSES: My trick with ornamental grasses is to prune most to about 8-4" from the ground using a hand pruner while de-thatching the brown dried plumes with my hands.



Tools for pruning

Here's my top three add a pair of gloves and you are golden.

1. Bypass pruning shears. Your basic pruning tool, use this for perennials, grasses and most shrubs.
2. Pruning lopping shears. Use this for larger woody shrubs, and small trees.
3. Sawzall electric saw. Equipped with a wood blade this tool makes quick work of most branches and small trunks without having to use a chainsaw.

My go to Pruning tools:



1. bypass pruning shears



2. pruning lopping shears

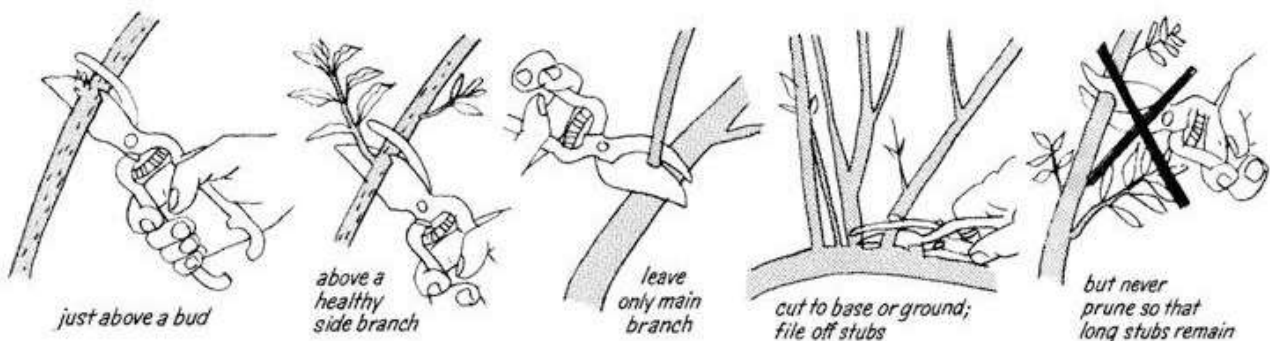


3. the sawzall electric saw.

Next up, do it right! Here are some good techniques.

Cut out dead, diseased and crossing branches first; then prune to shape. Prune pomegranate, wisteria, summer blooming spireas, and nandina. Shrubs like Chamisa, butterfly bush, Russian sage, and ornamental grasses (except blue fescue) can be pruned almost to the ground. Remove the spent flower and seed heads on Red Yuccas and other similar plants. Save the seeds and share with friends.

Pruning techniques:





Pruning red yucca, trim off seed pods. then shake seed pods into a paper bag and save for spring planting.





Tools

Having the right tools in place is critical to proper preparations. Come Springtime these tools need to be in working condition, accessible, and easy to use. Check out the [My Landscape Coach Store](#) for a sneak peak at my favorite tools. And keep reading below for why I love them.

Hands down these are my must have tools for yard work:

1. **Leather gloves:** I've tried so many gloves over the years and the ones I keep coming back to are soft leather gloves, they fit well and hold up to all the wear and tear. Even after being left outside and buried by the dog. Gloves protect your hands from damage, bruising, blistering and dirt in general. However, I still prefer bare hands for small weed pulling.

2. **Shovel:** There are many different types of shovels each used for specific jobs but all you really need is the spade shovel. It's useful for digging (of course), picking up piles of debris, and transferring material like mulch to different areas of the yard.

3. **Broom:** A great tool for indoors and out to simply clean up dirt and debris. (there are many different types but honestly as long as you have one you are set.) Although I must admit, I now use my yard blower to do a lot of jobs my broom used to do.

4. **Wire Rake:** A great all around tool. It grabs leaves and debris without damaging plants. It even acts as a small pruner, I use it for groundcovers such as vinca or plumbago to prune out those spent leaves, and shoots. By far I use it the most on my native grasses such as my bluegrama, buffalo grass lawn to clean up the old seed heads and dead grass.

5. **Hand pruner (bypass pruning shears):** Use this versatile tool indoors for trimming bouquets and outdoors for removing small branches from trees.

6. **Collapsible yard bag:** A great freestanding catch all bag for leaves, weeds, yard debris. Insert a large black garbage bag to make bagging leaves a cinch. It is extremely lightweight and collapses for easy storage.

7. **Hula Ho:** Hands down the best tool for removing weeds. You gently scrape it along the ground about an inch deep and the weeds, root and all, get removed from the ground.

8. **Weed Wacker:** An electric weed wacker expedites the chore of mowing and trimming native grasses. Tasks that can be achieved with a hand pruner if you have a lot of time to kill.

9. **Yard Blower:** I usually don't like mono-tools (tools with only one purpose) but when you live where there is a ton of wind and dust and little rain this tool makes prepping for my summer parties easy. It takes me 15 minutes to blow off my patio and porch. (over 1000sf) The end result is amazing. My outdoor furniture, patio and garden beds look tidy and kept. I can't believe I didn't get one of these sooner.

Do you have all the proper tools ready? If not, check out the [My Landscape Coach store](#) today to get your tools in time for Spring!





Mulch

Mulch (noun) a covering, as of straw, compost, or permeable sheeting, spread on the ground around plants to prevent excessive evaporation or erosion, enrich the soil, inhibit weed growth, etc.

Install at least 4" of a mulch layer on top of the dirt to prevent weeds. Install at least 12" of mulch over an existing high water use grass lawn to kill the lawn.

Types of mulch:

Organic mulch: This may be shredded bark, pine needles, shredded leaves, grass clippings, compost, straw and hay.



Stone mulch: Crushed stone pretty much describes this type. After the stone is mined, the rock goes through rock crushers and gets sieved into a variety of sizes. The largest rock I like to use as mulch is typically called crushed (angular) gravel and it varies from 1-2" in size. Pea gravel is the next most popular, and the name describes it perfectly, it's rounded gravel the size of peas. 2" depth is about the max for this material unless you like the way walking through sand feels. After all the larger pieces are removed, small angular rock (again about pea size) plus the smallest type fines (kind of like colored dirt) remain. These are called crusher fines (decomposed granite). The huge benefit of this material is that it compacts together nicely due to the variety of sizes and angularity of the material. If tamped down, crusher fines may even be used as a handicap accessible surface material. I like 3" of this crusher fines if installed over landscape fabric and 4" of it compacted if installed over bare dirt for pathways.





Composting

Composting is another kind of recycling you can do to help save space in our landfill and benefit your plants and garden at the same time.

Did you know...?

Over 20% of what goes to Albuquerque's landfill is grass, leaves, tree and shrub clippings, and other yard waste.

Composting turns organic (natural) materials such as grass, leaves and shrub clippings into dark brown, crumbly, sweet-smelling soil conditioner. Compost added to the soil of potted plants makes them healthier and greener. Compost holds moisture and nutrients for the garden so flowers and vegetables are more beautiful and abundant. Compost also saves money by decreasing the need for fertilizers and water while conserving natural resources.

If you would like to attend a composting class, schedule a composting class for your organization or become a master composter, resources are available. Just click on the link below, hosted by NM State University, Bernalillo County Extension Master Composters.

bernalilloextension.nmsu.edu/mastercomposter/

[Download the latest brochure from the Master Composters.](#)

[Desert Composting Workshop](#)

What to Compost

- Grass clippings
- Leaves and twigs
- Shrub prunings
- Dead plants
- Weeds and sod
- Sawdust and lint
- Hair
- Vegetable and fruit wastes (bury these in the middle of your compost pile and cover them up)

Do Not Compost

- Meat and fish
- Cheese and dairy products
- Grease or fat
- Oil or salad dressings
- Bones
- Pet wastes
- Wood ashes



- Logs or wood branches
- Diseased plants

Using Compost

Compost is ready to use when it is reduced to a sweet smelling, crumbly, dark brown humus. It has many uses and can make gardening easier and more successful. Soil Amending is the natural thing to do with compost. Dig compost into flower beds and vegetable gardens each year to renew the soil. Compost can be added to soil at any time. It keeps plants healthy, improves soil structure, holds moisture in the soil, suppresses plant pathogens and adds nutrients, minerals, and beneficial soil organisms to help plants grow.

Mulching is a great way to use compost. Spread compost several inches thick on top of the soil around plants, trees and shrubs. It will deter weeds and conserve water. Potting Soil for house plants can be made by mixing equal parts of compost with sand or soil.

How to Compost

Composting is easy! It is nature's way of recycling organic materials. Composting happens if leaves, grass and shrub clippings build up in layers and stay moist. But you can speed up the process, and if you do it in a convenient location, you reap the benefits as well as reducing yard waste.

Step 1 - Find a Suitable Place

Choose a sheltered shady spot that is handy for you. Put your bin near a water source but not where water stands.

Step 2 - Build a Compost Bin

There are many types of bins you can buy, but if you want to build your own, here are several ideas for simple bins using free or inexpensive materials:

From wire fencing, make a round bin at least three feet in diameter. Ten feet of fencing will make a convenient sized bin.

Make a square bin from snow fencing. Use 4-inch posts or a two by four at each corner for stability. Build a bin with four sides out of four foot square frames covered with wire mesh using one-by-four, or two-by-four lumber. Hinges and hooks on one side make it easy to open and close. If you have room, build a three-section bin. Turn the compost from one section into another from incoming, to working, to finished.

Build a bin from cement blocks or old bricks, turn blocks on their sides to allow air to enter, or leave some spaces between the bricks. You can also compost without a bin, just by piling up your organic materials. However, your compost will "cook" faster if you enclose it in a structure.

Get an old plastic garbage bin with lid. Cut off the bottom of the bin (leaving any necessary support pannels at the bottom). Then bury the bin about 4" into the ground. This method helps keep moisture in and uses the moisture from the ground.

Step 3 - Start Your Compost Pile

Layering the materials helps keep proportions right for efficient composting. Start with:

6- to 8-inch layer of coarse materials like weeds, shrub clippings, or wood chips.

1-inch layer of animal manure, if you have it.



6- to 8-inch layer of mixed leaves, grass, and other yard waste. Mix grass clippings with dry woody materials. (A layer of grass alone should be less than 2 inches thick.) Materials that are less than 3/4 inch in size decompose the fastest. Shredding helps.

Water each layer as you add it, and be sure not to compact it because oxygen is important for composting. Repeat the layers as many times as necessary but for convenience do not make the heap more than 4 feet high.

Step 4 - Keep it Damp

Water the pile enough to keep it as damp as a wrung-out sponge. Turn or "churn" the pile once a week using a spading fork. This allows air to get inside the pile and helps the compost "cook" faster. Your compost should be ready in two to three months. Remember that composting doesn't happen overnight, and the heap will need regular tending to keep it working.

References:

To learn more, call the City of Albuquerque Solid Waste Management Department at (505)761-8100 or you may also contact these resources:

Soilutions Soilutions@aol.com

Albuquerque Area Extension Master Gardener,

<http://www.abcwua.org/water-wise-gardening.aspx> (505) 243-1386

City of Albuquerque

<https://www.cabq.gov/solidwaste/recycling/yard-waste/backyard-composting>

Bernalillo County Master Composters <http://bernalilloextension.nmsu.edu/mastercomposter/>

Water Authority also has compost available for homeowners visit <https://www.abcwua.org/>

Compost_Request.aspx





Siberian elm removal

The Siberian elm is a hardy fast growing deciduous tree in the Southwest. It is listed as a noxious tree in New Mexico. It reproduces via seed. Seed is dispersed primarily via wind. It is a noxious weed because it can dominate areas within a few years due to its rapid growth and how hardy it is.

It is extremely resistant to mortality. There are a few multi part strategies that have been used to remove the Siberian elm. Below I will talk about some methods I recommend based on talking to experts, experimenting in the field and scouring the internet. Many of these ideas come from the Forest Service, you will find resources at the end of this section.

How do we kill Siberian Elm? This is the million dollar question.

- Persistence
- Excavation
- Air Knife Excavation
- Girdling
- Herbicide

Physical Control :

To control Siberian elm, it is necessary to destroy the root system. Physical control can be done on a range of scales—from individual plant removal (from hand tools to excavators) to broad-scale clearing (from tillers to bulldozers). Mechanical clearing often requires repeat applications. For residential purposes we will focus on manual methods of removal.

- (1) Manual Methods Hand removal – Newly emerged seedlings and saplings with a stem diameter less than 3/8 inch are easily removed by hand pulling or hoeing. Small trees with a stem diameter between 3/8 and 2.5 inches may be hand grubbed with a shovel, hoe, or weed tool such as the Weed Wrench™ or Root Talon™.
- (2) Suppression by cutting – In areas with just a few large trees, trunks may be cut close to the ground to remove top growth. Anticipate that root and trunk resprouts will return later in the growing season and will require repeated follow-up cutting. Cutting is more effective when followed up with a chemical treatment (see cut-stump treatment in the “Chemical Control” section).
- (3) Girdling – In late spring to midsummer on larger trees, use an ax, saw, or chain saw to make two horizontal, circumferential cuts around the entire trunk. Place one cut 3 to 4 inches above the other through the bark and cambial tissue. Using a blunt object, such as the ax head, knock off and remove the bark between the cuts. Care should be taken to only remove the bark and outside cambial tissue while minimizing damage to the wood (xylem). Deeper cuts into the wood often triggers the plant to respond as if it were cut down and causes the tree to resprout from the roots. Leave girdled trees in place for 2 to 3 years and check them periodically to ensure that the bark does not grow together again. You can combine this with a chemical treatment as noted below.



Chemical Control:

Herbicide spraying is rarely successful as a one-time treatment so it is important to anticipate that treated areas will need to be monitored for several years and resprouts and new seedlings will require further treatment in the future. Care should always be taken when spraying any herbicide near other desirable plants. Always read labels carefully and follow safety precautions when exposed to these products. Below are three ways you can apply a chemical treatment to the Siberian Elm to prevent growth.

- (1) Foliage Application: Foliar spraying may be used to control seedlings, saplings, and mature trees of Siberian elm that are generally less than 6 feet in height and are easily covered with a spray application. Spray or hand sponge a glyphosate solution on the leaves of the tree. (Glyphosate solutions are products like Round Up.)
- (2) Topical chemical application to Cut Stems and Stumps: Cut-stump treatment with herbicide allows specific trees to be immediately removed. Use a chain saw to cut the trunk as close to the ground as possible. Within 5 to 15 minutes of cutting, apply glyphosate to the cut surface using a paint brush, wick applicator, or low-volume hand-held sprayer.
- (3) Basal spraying: Basal bark spraying is a method that is most appropriate for controlling smaller trees less than 8 feet tall with stems that are about 2 to 3 inches in diameter. Use a garden sprayer to deliver a mist spray 6 inches from the base of the stem up to 12 inches above the ground. Spray a band of herbicide around the entire circumference of the stem until the bark is wet but not running off. A 20 percent solution of triclopyr combined with 80 percent penetrating oil should be mixed and applied in the winter (January or February) or from mid-summer to early fall (June-September). Add blue dye to the chemical solution as an aid for determining coverage. Leave treated trees standing in place so they can be revisited the next year and, if necessary, new foliage can be spot sprayed.
- (4) Girdling with herbicide: as described in part in the “Physical Methods” section, is an effective control treatment for larger trees. Spray or paint the cut-surface of girdled areas with a 50–100 percent concentration of glyphosate or triclopyr. The most effective time to girdle and apply chemical treatment is during summer when Siberian elm is fully leafed out and actively growing.

Once Siberian elm is controlled, planting desirable trees and other restoration activities may be used to help prevent the problem from recurring. This includes establishing a thick cover of competing vegetation (i.e., desirable trees, shrubs, and grasses) that can provide shade and crowd out Siberian elm. Regardless of the initial strategy used, the key to successful long-term control of Siberian elm is to monitor treated areas for several years after initial treatment. Always be prepared to remove any new plants quickly. Failure to perform followup monitoring and treatment could result in a return to pretreatment density levels.

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Plant Nurseries in Albuquerque

The question always remains, where to go? First things first, let me review why it's best to go to a local nursery in your city as opposed to a big box store.

Obviously shopping local means the money goes back into the local economy and we all love that so that's a win win. Just like no two fingerprints are made alike neither are yards. Every single yard has its own unique environment that includes things like sun exposure, wind exposure, soils, drainage, climate, bugs, orientation, views, weather conditions and elevation. And certain species of plants like certain types of conditions. Plants that are grown in your region for your region are going to be way better suited for your specific yard.

Plant nurseries pride themselves in getting plants that are specifically grown for your area. And the only way to assure that you get a plant that is suited for your yard will be to go to a local nursery. There are so many factors to consider when purchasing plants, so sticking to local nurseries will help enormously in your plants future success.

Local nurseries have very knowledgeable staff that have experience dealing with all the variables of yards just like yours. But remember, they have limited time so go prepared with a list of questions for your yard. Make sure you note all the conditions of your space so the nursery staff can steer you right.

So if you have gotten anything from this email remember **DO NOT PURCHASE PLANTS FROM THE BIG BOX STORES** like Home Depot, Lowes, Walmart, K-mart, Target, etc. I'm serious, instead go to a local nursery.

Have you ever wondered which plant nursery to go to? I've been busy this Spring visiting local nurseries to find out just that. Below I'm sharing a few key features from 6 local nurseries.

[Alameda Greenhouse](#) This plant nursery located along Alameda near 4th street is best known for their thousands of vegetable seedlings. It is quite a sight to see, the greenhouses are FULL of rows and rows of vegetables and it's no wonder they pride themselves on growing their own plants. A must stop for all your vegetable needs. Of course they carry a ton of other plants like perennials, annuals, groundcovers, trees, roses, and more but go for the vegetables.

[Jericho Nursery](#) Two locations city wide (a northwest location along Alameda and a northeast location west of the I-25/Osuna intersection), this nursery came into existence shortly after the Rowlands closed around the city. I'm so happy they did because they provide some unique items not found at other nurseries in town. Now of course they have the usual annuals, perennials, natives, trees, roses, shrubs and more but you'd never guess they have all kinds of specialty miniature garden and fairy garden materials. YES, you read that right. It's worth the visit just check out the display. You'll also find a friendly staff and everything you need to make a terrarium, garden tools, products and outdoor décor.

[Rehms Nursery](#) Known as your neighborhood nursery, this nursery located at 5801 Lomas Blvd has everything you need for your yard all conveniently located near those of us in the near northeast heights, nob hill, and uptown. The staff is extremely knowledgeable and the deep family like atmosphere and roots of this store shine through. It's no surprise they've been in business for over 80 years.

[Osuna Nursery](#) Quite a large nursery located on Osuna just east of Edith, you can find just about everything you need. I used to worry I'd get lost here but their new wayfinding system directs you around the grounds. But one of the coolest features of Osuna is their Plant Pharmacy. The plant pharmacy features certified staff eager and willing to answer all your wildest questions about your plants. Bring a picture of your aphids or leaves from the actual plant and they diagnose the problem, What a great feature for those of us with ailing plants.



[Plants of the Southwest](#) Natives, natives, natives. Located on 4th street north of Chavez Rd, they sell native New Mexico plants and seed. Just about any plant you find at this nursery will grow with ease in your yard. I love that they sell the small 2" pots. Natives tend to grow fast so you can save money by buying smaller plants. You will also find a wide variety of seed from vegetables to any type of wildflower you'd like. They even curate specialty blends of wildflowers and grass lawn seeds.

[Plant World](#) Originally only a wholesale nursery; Plant World is the go to place for contractors in Albuquerque. Now anyone can shop here via their Garden Club which costs \$25 for a lifetime membership. Conveniently located on El Pueblo north of Edith, you will be able to find everything you need for your yard. In fact, they sell some of the largest ball and burlap trees in town.

Other Miscellaneous landscape maintenance needs

Wood Structures

Reseal wood structures, furniture or any outdoor wood every other year with a sealant. I like to use Penofin brand sealant here in the Southwest. <http://www.penofin.com/>

Water features and ponds

Clean out your pond, filter and pump every spring.

Outdoor fabrics

I recommend you wash all your outdoor fabrics like pillows, seat cushions, hammocks, outdoor rugs. Typically you can throw those pillows in the washing machine. Be sure to read all the labels before doing so. You could also fill up your bathtub with water and some mild soap and hand wash your items. I like to do that with my hammock to prevent the strings from getting all tangled in the washing machine. For seat cushions and other large bulky items put some warm water and soap in a bowl, grab a sponge and hand sponge down your fabrics. All fabrics will dry quickly outdoors in the sun. For umbrellas, just spray them down with a hose.

Treating outdoor fabric

Are you nervous to leave your outdoor pillows actually outside? I sure am but in order to save time, I like to leave my pillows out in the elements, but now I'm stressing about the fading of the pillow colors. Yes, even if you get the very nice [Sunbrella brand](#) fabric pillows they will still fade in our intense sun. (Remember, we are at 5000 ft here in NM).

You can try to combat it by spraying your pillows with a UV fabric protector. There are a few out on the market but Sunbrella fabrics recommends 303 High Tech Fabric Guard which you can get at any big box hardware store.



What's next?

Now that you have read and used this maintenance guide I'd love to see you get into a routine of using it monthly. Perhaps make a note on your calendar each month to review the yard tasks of the month. The goal is that this guide will help you simplify your yard maintenance.

With all the time you are saving on maintenance, you can spend more time enjoying your yard. What's even better now you have time to think about cool new additions to your yard!

Have these thoughts run through your head.

Mistake #3: A new landscape will cost too much.

That yard you covet, it must have cost a fortune. So you think you need to save up money before you start.

When did we decide landscapes are expensive? Have we asked our neighbors what they spent on their yard? Did we call a contractor and get a price or is it that when we go to Home Depot we notice that plants are \$12 a pop so imagining an entire yard of plants has us freaking out.

Chances are that yard you covet was built a few dollars at a time.

Here is what I learned, the best thing about landscape is that time is your best friend. Oh and it's not all about the \$12 plants. There are so many possibilities in your backyard that exist without spending a dime.

Most people believe they have to buy the right waterwise low maintenance plants in order to have a beautiful yard in the Southwest. Instead I've discovered that plants are just one piece of the puzzle. Understanding the big picture of your yard is far more important if you want to have that beautiful yard.

I help homeowners who are overwhelmed and struggling with their yard get a weed free, waterwise, low maintenance, and beautiful yard. My Landscape Coach is available to unearth your yard's potential today via the Landscape Design Made Easy online course.

I am excited to introduce you to **Landscape Design Made Easy**, my new and improved online design course that teaches you to design a beautiful yard.

[Landscape Design Made Easy](#) will help you create a beautiful yard without feeling overwhelmed.

This is unlike going to a garden nursery and asking for advice or paging through a NM plant book and wondering which plants to install. Why? Because those options just focus on one aspect of the yard: the plants.



Instead, in this course I will teach you how to look at the big picture of your yard and how all the pieces, one being plants, come together.

You can see what it's all about [right here](#).

More specifically, you'll get videos, worksheets, tutorials, and checklists to help you design your yard step by step. This online landscape design course will teach you how to create a *landscape plan* for your unique yard.

What's included in the online landscape design course?

- Five (5) online teaching units filled with a total of 19 lessons.
- A 45 page workbook to be used in unison with the course.
- Private Facebook group for support and accountability.
- Step-by-step checklists.
- Mulch, plant selection, and irrigation tutorials.
- My favorite garden tool's list.
- Four (4) planting lists and outdoor living palettes.
- Outdoor living extras such as lighting, my favorite outdoor furniture stores, and detailed information on water harvesting.

The best part is: you won't be alone on your venture. You'll be part of a community of other homeowners working on their yard and sharing their own success stories.

Here's the link: [Landscape Design Made Easy online course](#). Buy it today for only \$147

Keep in touch with My Landscape Coach

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MyLandscapeCoach/>

Instagram: [My Landscape Coach](#)

Twitter: [@jillguarinobrow](#)

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/bgandmore/boards/>

Join our Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1152178311497145/>

Resources and references:

<http://mylandscapecoach.com/> <https://www.cabq.gov/>

<http://www.abcwua.org/> <http://bernalilloextension.nmsu.edu/mastercomposter/>

<http://www.albuquerquegardencenter.org/> <http://www.xericgardenclub.org/>

<http://mastergardeners.nmsu.edu/> <http://xeriscapenm.com/>

<http://www.thedotgarden.org/>