

# garden

By Roger Myers

Roger Myers is the President and Founder of American Beauty Landscaping. Established in 1979, ABL is the Valley's industry leader with more than 100 national, state and local awards to its landscape design and build credit.



YO 1207 Log # 514

## Life In The Winter Garden...



It's that time of year when our thoughts turn to Holly Boughs, Christmas Trees, and Poinsettia, while thoughts of our outdoor gardens are only a recent memory. However life goes on (in most cases!) just outside our windows, as the earth in our northern zone 5 climate rests now, and prepares for a new growing season in the spring. Much needed nutrients and moisture are being stored in the topsoil, and ground water, now that neither plants nor sunlight are depleting them.

You would be surprised how much life is going on just under that snow pack even in the middle of January! Take your middle school child to the woods and explore the flora and fauna that persists under the layer of snow and leaves! You would be amazed.

You may be inspired by walking in nature. There is always something to learn from uncultivated landscapes, which manage to be quite beautiful without our intervention.

It may be subdued, but winter's palette is far from colorless. Even shrubs and trees that remain leafless through the winter months can provide accents of color as well as interest in their branch patterns.

Shrubs that retain fruit, particularly colorful berries and hips, perform multiple functions at this time of year. These qualities are good to keep in mind when planning new plantings. Just as we are attracted to the bright red berries of winterberry holly or Harvest Gold Crab trees, these attract hungry birds throughout fall and early winter.

Especially during the winter season, the presence of varied wildlife adds another dimension to our gardens. Don't forget to provide a source of water for the birds, as cold dry weather kills more birds than lack of food.

### Here Comes Bambi

At some point in your gardening career watching the white tails gorging on your garden wears thin. Especially when you have just planted those plants specifically for their winter color.

Certain shrubs are like chocolate for deer. Yews, Arbs, Kale, Hemlock, and Viburnum to name a few. But all plants can become a target when times are lean.

I know its work, and somewhat unsightly but the most fool proof method is to wrap them in burlap and chicken wire. This is especially frustrating when you planted these for their winter color in the first place.

The best defense is to plant trees and shrubs that are not on the menu. Lilacs, Maples, Spirea, Beech, Birch, are some woodies that have shown resistance. But again, anything goes with a desperate deer. For some of us, deer, will always be a four letter word!

### Posts/Containers

Finally, don't forget to protect your pots and ornaments, especially the valuable ones. Your best bet is to bring them indoors – including statues, terra-cotta containers, and even cement ones. At least empty them and turn them up-side-down. Fountains should be drained and covered. And you thought your garden work was done! Merry Christmas, Happy New Year from all of us at American Beauty Landscaping.

