

GIFTS FOR THE GARDENER, COOK & ADVENTURER!

Sunset

A
PERFECT DAY
AT THE
TREE FARM

P. 62

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SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA

Your CHECKLIST

**PLANT**

Sow seeds or plant seedlings of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, spinach, and Swiss chard. Plant three or four times the amount you would in the spring, since they'll grow much more slowly now.

To help concentrate daytime warmth and increase germination of seeds, cover seedbeds with clear plastic sheeting. Anchor down the edges with soil or rocks to keep out slugs and other critters and keep the sheeting from blowing away.

Transplant asparagus, globe artichokes, Jerusalem artichokes, and rhubarb.

Plant more spring-blooming bulbs early this month and save some to plant from mid-February through mid-March for extended bloom through late spring.

When transplanting, be careful to not compact the soil. If there has been a lot of rain, the soil will be cold and moist; tamping the soil too heavily could destroy vital air pores.

**MAINTAIN**

Continue watering unless rains keep the soil damp. Irrigate just as deeply but less frequently than during summer. Cold weather dries out plants, making them more susceptible to frost damage.

Don't worry that your houseplants don't seem especially



"Barrel cactus look almost like natural holiday ornaments."

JOHANNA SILVER,
GARDEN EDITOR

perky right now—many go dormant. Stop feeding them and water them less frequently to allow them to rest. Also, be sure they're not getting blasted with hot air from a vent or fireplace.

**HARVEST**

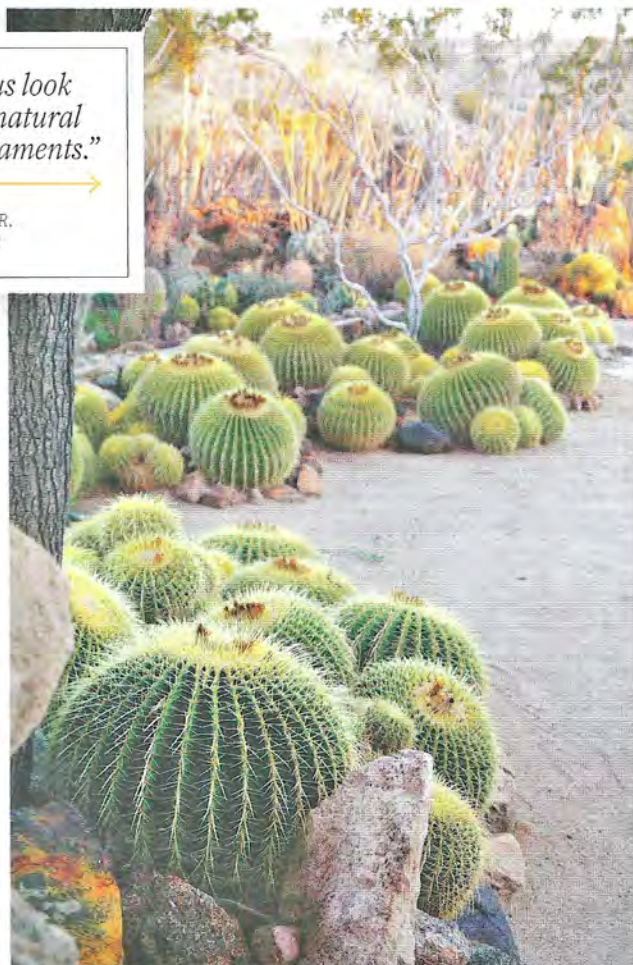
Extend your harvest of leaf crops, such as lettuce, kale, mustard, and spinach, by removing only the outer leaves, letting the three or four center leaves develop further.

**PROTECT**

Clean up all garden debris, disposing of diseased material and composting "clean" foliage. Leaving debris in the garden provides harboring areas for overwintering pests.

Cover your backyard compost pile loosely with a tarp or black plastic to hold in heat and keep rain from leaching out the valuable nutrients.

Thoroughly clean, sharpen, and oil tools, and apply linseed oil to wooden handles. Store tools in a protected area, as severe weather and moisture contribute to their premature aging.

**GARDEN WE LOVE**

Desert romance

When it comes to designing a garden, nature can often be the best instructor. In Joshua Tree, California, Gino Dreese and Troy Williams knew the only way to give their yard a fighting chance amid the region's harsh conditions—110° summers, subfreezing winters, nutrient-poor soil—was to mimic the desert around them. With that in mind, they planted palo verde trees, native creosote bush, and ocotillo. But they also wanted to make a visual statement: By planting hundreds of golden barrel cactus (*Echinocactus grusonii*), they set their garden apart from the rest of the landscape in a spectacular fashion. ▲



Learn what to plant when with our year-round checklists: sunset.com/checklists.