



• I count on others to keep track of bulb types that need some chilling. My yearly reminder notice to refrigerate crocus, hyacinths and tulips was delivered as I relaxed on the Queen Anne Cottage porch, savoring the fabulous Arboretum vista and thinking about the Holidays and Paperwhite narcissus. (Such instant gratification they

offer.) Along this line of thinking, I have never missed the early –spring show of flowering bulbs in grand pots at the headquarters of *Sunset Magazine* in Menlo Park. “Be patient with your pots” is the solemn advice from Sunset staff members. Tip number two is to set your tulip, daffodil and hyacinth bulbs close together on a base of potting soil in a 16" pot. Do this at the end of November...early December. Cover with more soil...not too much...and then frost all of this with wood shavings. Dampen the shavings before setting the pot outside in a cool spot. If you prepare a myriad of pots you won't have to take the trip to Menlo Park at all. You'll have your own springtime spectacle. If the winter is dry, my little peachicks water the pots. The little darlings also keep watch so each pot is moved into full sun when leaves develop. Some peachicks might eat leaves and flowers, but not *my* babies.

• Holidays In The Garden translates to Holidays in *your* garden and treats for your plants. By the end of December your holly, juniper, nandina, pine, pittosporum, podocarpus, pyracantha and toyon will be exhausted from your constant annoying gathering of greens in addition to all of the pruning and cutting back. While you dash off for a pedicure, treat those tired darlings with a shot of half-strength liquid fertilizer at month's end. And as you race past, make a promise to return in January with some romantic camellias.

• I always have several *Amaryllis* in bloom by the second week in January. My secret is simple. Be certain that the fabulous “A's” are kept indoors in a well-lighted spot. And, oh yes, they, along with the spirited kalanchoe, relish water on a regular basis. •



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