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Writer: Tony Melton, County Agent  
Florence County

## Keep Those New Year's Gardening Resolutions

"To Have a More Beautiful Yard or Garden," must be a popular New Year's Resolution this year. Many people have put action to their resolutions, and have signed-up for our Master Gardener Class. However, there are a few seats left in our class and since Christmas was such a busy time, we are extending our registration period a few more days. You may immediately mail your \$125 registration fee to Clemson Extension, 2685 S. Irby St., Florence, S.C. 29505. Also, you may pay at our office in the back of the Social Services Building at the corner of Third Loop & Irby on January 4th or 5th. Whether or not you are able to join us in this thirteen week extensive gardening class, you can do things now to make next summer's gardening more successful.

First of all, do a soil test. This is the best way to know what is available and/or is needed for your plants to grow properly. Doing a soil test now and adding lime now (if needed) will give time for the soil pH to adjust before this summer's growing season. No plant will grow properly if the soil pH is not right. To do a soil test take many sub-samples from the entire area and mix them together in a bucket then bring a pint of the mixed soil to our office located in the back of the Public Services Building at the corner of Third Loop and Irby St.

Next, don't throw away those leaves. Compost them or add them to your garden spot now to degrade for next year's garden. Remember that adding uncomposted leaves to growing plants will rob nitrogen but after they have decomposed or composted they will supply nutrients to your plants.

Finally, prune properly. Most plants except for early spring flowering plants should be pruned this time of year. Don't be afraid to prune, but do it properly. Never sheer plants or give them what I call "A Flat Top Hair Cut." Always remove limbs all the way back to another limb. Removing disease, dead, or problem limbs will make a plant more beautiful and healthy.

To learn the specifics on gardening we have both free and for-sale publications at our office in the back of the Public Services Building on the corner of Third Loop and Irby St. You may also visit our Home & Garden Information Center through our web site at [www.clemson.edu](http://www.clemson.edu). I may be contacted through our web site, [amelton@clemson.edu](mailto:amelton@clemson.edu), or 661-4800.

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