A Restful Season

The snow blankets my garden beds, and I peer out longingly at them each morning. The frozen ground is no longer fit to be dug, and most of the straggler plants have wilted away. Each year I have grand plans to build cold frames and harvest through the winter. I tried it once in my previous garden, but the area was too shaded to sustain life in the winter. I intend to go through with the task at some point but, for now, I'm content with having a winter break.

I miss the garden, yet I'm thankful for the respite. I spend my winters pouring time into other hobbies; reading, in particular. A moment away from the plants and weeds helps keep me on my toes in the spring. I imagine that if I gardened twelve months of the year, I'd get sick of it. I enjoy the time off. It allows me to reflect on the season now behind me. What went wrong? What was successful? Is there something I forgot to plant? Is there a crop I should avoid planting next

year? When I feel like it, I create lists and plan for the upcoming gardening season. It’s never a chore because I do it when the mood strikes. I have plenty of time to revise and rework my plans, too. The winter is a leisurely planning period – it never feels like work.

This restful period is well earned. As a gardener, I spend the spring, summer, and part of the fall, prepping, planting, nurturing, and harvesting. It’s hard work. By the winter, I’m spent. Now that the holidays are around the corner, I’m thankful to have the extra time to prepare to receive guests. It’s also a time when the household starts to toss germs back and forth. I’ve been lucky enough to avoid winter illnesses for years. This time around, though, I’ve been walloped. I’ve been bundled up in my blanket, saddled with a fever and a throat that feels as if it’s on fire. Sipping my herbal tea, I look out on the quiet, still garden, and feel grateful that we’re both able to take advantage of a little rest.