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Toby Buckland shows you how to make a winter container

1 Recycle your Christmas tree. If it's the pot-grown variety, leave it in its container or plant it in the garden for next year. If it's rootless, shred it for mulch. Got a woodburning stove? Use the trunk for firewood after seasoning for a year.

2 Check for damage. Wet and windy weather may have blown down fence panels, dislodged stakes and left ground waterlogged. Move potted plants somewhere sheltered until the bad weather passes and tidy wet leaves from the lawn — they can smother the grass.

3 Prune fruit trees. This is best done when they're dormant, and it's much easier to get them in shape without leaves. Remove dead, dying and diseased branches.

4 Sow sweet peas. They need plenty of light, so pop them on a sunny windowsill or a high shelf in the greenhouse. Alpines need frost to germinate, so sow in pots outside as soon as possible.

5 Feed the birds. Fat balls and bird cake are great sources of energy. If you buy them, remove them from the nylon mesh bags, which can trap or injure birds. Or make your own by pouring melted fat onto a mixture of seeds, nuts, dried fruit, oatmeal, cheese and cake.