

February Garden Activities from Your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Trees and Shrubs - Forsythia and quince are easy to force into bloom indoors. Cut branches when the buds show a touch of color and place them in a vase of water. They should bloom within a week or so.

February is a good month to plant and transplant trees and shrubs.

Prune flowering shrubs that flower before May just after they bloom; prune those that bloom after May prior to spring growth.

Prune apple and pear trees.

Continue dormant pruning; prune out any tree branches that are crossed, broken, or diseased.

Observe Arbor Day by planting a tree on February 21st. In Georgia, Arbor Day is celebrated the third Friday in February.

Fertilize established ornamental trees and shrubs always following label directions.

Cut back butterfly bush to 12-18 inches to promote thicker growth and more blooms.

Check the mulch around your landscape plants and add some if necessary.

Trees and shrubs should have about a six-inch-thick covering layer of mulch.

Prune overgrown broadleaf shrubs late this month.

Prune evergreens. Do not severely prune pines, spruce, or junipers as they are unable to generate new growth from old wood.

If necessary, prune crepe myrtle by selecting 3, 5, or 7 main stems. Prune old seed heads and twiggy growth that grows from the base of the plant.

Prune Clematis armandii immediately after it blooms.

Flowerbeds - Fertilize spring bulbs as they emerge with 10-10-10, following label directions. Note gaps in plantings and plan fall bulb order.

Prune ornamental grasses down to 12-18 inches to expose base of clump to sunshine.

Prune climbing roses after the first flush of blooms. Now is a good time to tie main canes to a support before they leaf out and remove any stray canes.

Divide ground covers that have become too thick and prune back liriope before new spring growth begins by setting your lawn mower to its highest setting and cut.

Look for blooms on your Lenten rose (*Hellebores orientalis*).

Keep faded flowers and weak growth removed from pansies and keep them well watered and fertilized.

Soil Test - Take soil samples from your garden area in order to plan your fertilizer program. Contact your County Extension Agent for instructions on having your soil tested.

Prepare vegetable garden area for planting. Add fertilizer and lime if indicated by your soil test.

Houseplants - An occasional lukewarm bath in the sink or shower is a tonic for houseplants that overwinter in hot, dry rooms.

When the weather is extremely cold, close the window shades or place protective cardboard between houseplants and window glass to protect houseplants.

Compost - Add any remaining leaves and garden debris to your compost pile if you have one. If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

Miscellaneous - Clean out the old nesting materials in your bluebird boxes early in the month and they will be ready when the bluebirds are ready to nest.

Feed birds and provide them with a fresh supply of water.

Use cat litter or sand on icy sidewalks instead of salt. Too much salt can burn nearby plant roots.

Service your lawn mower so it will be ready when you are for spring grass cutting.

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