

FEBRUARY

PRUNE



- Branches of crabapple, forsythia, peach, plum, pussy willow, quince, winter jasmine, and witch hazel - for forcing into bloom indoors. Crush stem ends, strip lower leaves, mist branches, wrap in newspaper or place in pails of water in cool room or protected garage with medium light. When buds show color, arrange branches and bring into warmth and good light.

- Prune crape-myrtles by removing seed capsules for large clusters of bloom in the summer.
- If your clematis was not pruned in the fall, do it now if it blooms on new wood. Those that bloom on old wood should be pruned after they bloom. Know the varieties you have and ask when to prune when buying new plants.
- Prune summer flowering shrubs such as Althea (Rose of Sharon), crape myrtle, Japanese spirea, butterfly bush, and Pee Gee Hydrangea. Do not prune more than 1/3 of a plant. It will need the remainder of its leaves to provide food for the plant.

FERTILIZE

- Circle herbs with lime, especially lavender. Put composted manure on boxwood and hollies.
- As soon as daffodil foliage emerges, use a light handful of 5-10-5 around each clump of bulbs and broadcast wood ashes around. Naturalized bulbs need very little fertilizing.
- Feed trees at the drip line and perennial beds with 5-10-5 (about 1 cup per inch of trunk diameter). Fertilize fruit trees as soon as ground thaws but before blossoming begins

BARE ROOT PLANTS

- Dormant roses, fruit trees and blueberries are frequently sold with no soil on their roots. They should be planted before they leaf out. If they arrive before you can plant them, keep them in a cool location such as a basement or a cool garage or refrigerator. Keep them moist by wrapping them in damp newspaper or plastic.

- Before planting, soak the roots overnight in water and prune away any broken ones. Then plant as you would any tree or shrub.
- When planting in clay soil, do not add organic material to the hole. Loosen the soil to at least twice the width of the pot or root ball and no deeper than the pot or root ball. Set the plant even with its original depth or a couple of inches higher (or with its graft union an inch above soil level). Firm the soil around the roots by watering the plant as soil is moved around the plant. Keep the soil moist but not wet during the first season in the garden. They can be planted outside one month before the last frost.

GARDEN CHORES

- Open and ventilate cold frame if temperature is above 45 degrees.
- Still time to sharpen, clean and oil garden tools, lawn mowers and spray equipment.
- Start a compost pile with winter mulches and clean garden refuse. Raw veggies and fruit scraps can be added throughout the composting cycle. Turn over the whole pile regularly to aerate it. Keep it moist but not soaking wet.
- Dead head old pansy flowers to encourage new blooms.
- Place orders for vegetable and flower seeds. Decide which shrubs and trees you will be ordering for March and April planting.



GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

- Early bulbs: Crocus, early iris, snowdrops early tulips, chionodoxa aconite
- Early perennials: Helleborus, daphne odora, heather, winter blooming honey suckle, and witch hazel.
- Early shrubs: Mahonia aquifolium (oregon grape holly) forsythia, winter jasmine
- Early trees: Star magnolias, cornelian cherry, flowering plum, redbud, witch hazel

WATER GARDENS

- Break the ice on your fish pond to prevent the buildup of gases which may cause the fish to die. Maintain the water level as high as possible. Keep water flowing freely by watching out for leaf jams and ice.



HINTS

- If you must move a dogwood or magnolia, do so in early spring.
- A good rule of thumb for planting rhododendrons: the smaller the leaf the more tolerant the plant will be of winter sunlight. Some rhodies, like the PJM, also bloom much earlier than the broader leaf rhododendrons.