

MARCH



PRUNE

- All early blooming plants like forsythia after blooming. Prune fruit trees and other deciduous trees and non blooming, needle-type evergreen shrubs (not hollies) before spring growth begins. Severe pruning will make evergreens look bare, so should be done just before new growth begins.
- Ornamental grasses are so attractive in winter so wait until new green growth first appears before cutting them back to a few inches
- above the ground with hedge clippers, pruners or if very heavy and thick, a power saw. Clip established ivy and yellowed liriopse leaves. Early March, prune hybrid tea roses leaving about 5 healthy canes 18-24" long. Prune caryopteris and butterfly bush to 6" from ground for a lower fuller shrub.
- Mid March - prune boxwood by hand No shearing. Thinning opens the thick growth allowing light and air to reach the inner branches. Prune all dead wood from azaleas and rhodies, and trees. Prune out inside growing branches of dogwood. Thin hydrangea and butterfly bush, hibiscus and other summer flowering shrubs and abelia by removing dead or old wood. Don't cut off ends where new blooms will bud out. Prune pussy willows back when catkins shed their overcoats. Prune pussy willows when past their prime. Prune all evergreens and deciduous shrubs and trees before they begin to bud out. Once you see new growth on trees and shrubs, cut back any winter killed twigs to green wood.

PLANT

- If needed, divide and/or transplant ornamental grasses.
- At last planting time is here, but do not plant in cold soggy soil. Plant pansies around bulbs like daffodils.
- Transplant deciduous & evergreen trees and shrubs while still dormant (when trees are beginning to bud or leaf out, they are most vulnerable). Move boxwoods now. Do not fertilize now.
- Bare root shrubs.
- New roses in prepared beds where they can get at least 6 hours of daily sunlight.



- When planting shrubs & trees, dig holes no deeper than 1 to 2” less than the height of the root ball and 2-3 times the width. Potted plants need to have their roots loosened, especially if they are pot bound.
- Fruit trees, dogwood, magnolia, maple, barberry, low cotoneasters, deutzia, mahonia, yucca, spirea, mock orange, needle and broadleaf evergreens now.
- Dahlias & tuberous begonias in pots to be put out after frost. Late March plant primroses, (polyanthus are best for this area).
- Divide large existing perennials like ajuga, shasta daisies, astilbe, coralbells, hostas, daylilies and liriop.



FERTILIZE

- Put compost on lilacs.
- Broadleaf and needle evergreens with fertilizer designed for acid loving plants.
- Fertilize trees with 5-10-5 or organic fertilizer, if not already done.
- Fertilize clematis, bearded iris, lilacs, peonies & wisteria with bone meal or 5-10-5. Add lime for lilacs, add potash for peonies and iris. Continue feeding pansies and bulbs with 5-10-5 every three weeks and dead head old flower heads for continuous bloom.
- Fertilize lily bulbs when sprouts appear above the ground: also, perennials lightly with 5-10-5.
- **Do not** fertilize cold season grass lawns in the spring.
- Remove fallen leaves and cut out dead twigs

WATCH FOR



- Black spot on roses and photinia (spray with appropriate fungicide every 2 weeks during growing season); also for powdery mildew and fungus; bagworm on conifers (pick off and destroy bags before caterpillars hatch in late May or June).
- Before buds break and when temperature is above 40 degrees, spray with horticultural dormant oil for scale, overwintering eggs of mites, mealy aphids on evergreens, fruit trees, lilacs, mulberry and boxwood.

MULCH

- Don't rush to remove mulch from perennials. Plants need protection during late cold weather. When plants start to grow, remove mulch to allow leaves to develop.
- Always keep mulch 6" + away from tree trunks, both for evergreen and deciduous trees. Harmful insects thrive in the mulch & can invade the bark on trees. Spread mulch around the tree wide enough to protect roots in the winter and keep lawn mowers and string trimmers from nicking bark on the trees in summer. Mulch depth should be limited to 2-3 inches.



INDOORS

- Plant dahlias & tuberous begonia tubers in pots; plant seeds of annuals in pots or flats in late March.

GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

- Early bulbs: chinodoxia, daffodils, dwarf iris, Virginia bluebells, hardy cyclamen and scilla.
- Shrubs: camellia, forsythia, mahonia, late pieris, carolina spice viburnum and *PJM* rhododendrons.
- Trees: saucer and star magnolia, redbud, willow.
- Deer & other animals will eat anything if they are really hungry but generally stay away from spirea, astilbe, junipers, yews (taxus) firethorn (pyracantha) and barberry.
- When weather permits remove old flower and shrub stocks and move leaves away from shrubs.



WATER GARDENS

- Begin feeding fish when water temperature reaches 50 degrees. At the same time begin a schedule to apply beneficial bacteria.
- Clean the pond now if you didn't do so in the fall (remember to dechlorinate fresh water). If you have sufficient plant material in your pond, you do not have to supplement by feeding.
- Reinstall and start your pond's pumping and filtration system. If you lowered plants to the bottom over the winter, now is the time to raise them.