



The Gardening Gazette

The Gardening Gazette is a free newsletter from the Clayton County Master Gardeners. We provide information on Master Gardener projects and tips to local homeowners.

(New website address: www.claytoncountymastergardeners.org)

Winter 2009

SEASONAL CALENDAR

JANUARY – The Month for Planting

- Spray dormant fruit trees & dogwoods
- Prune most of your deciduous trees & shrubs
- Add compost/mulch to protect any tender new growth that may appear prematurely
- Turn flower bed soil, if the ground is workable
- Keep a close eye open for insects on houseplants
- Now's the ideal time to inventory your supplies. Stores are stocking up and you can replenish before the rush
- Start some flower and veggie seeds indoors after the first of the year.

MARCH – The Month for Digging

- Prune roses; spray for black spot/feed
- Plant tender bulbs and tubers (gladiola, lilies, dahlias)
- Prepare vegetable garden soil for planting
- Pinch back houseplants to promote new growth
- Pull garden weeds while they are still young; turn compost pile
- Clean out birdhouses so they'll be ready when the birds return
- Remove dead, diseased or damaged branches and fallen leaves to discourage pests and diseases

FEBRUARY – The Month for Pruning

- Prune and shape deciduous vines such as honeysuckle
- Transplant deciduous shrubs and trees which are still dormant
- Till your vegetable garden to expose weeds and seeds which will perish
- Begin feeding houseplants using a 50% fertilizer mix
- Some perennials and ornamental grasses start to look ragged. Chop them low with sharp clippers
- Rejuvenate your overgrown hedges. If the plants are in good health, you may cut them back drastically
- About a month before the last frost date, you may plant peas



Tamara Patridge, CCMG Board VP, provided the Master Gardeners with a very informative Ikebana presentation by Hinoko Kono. "Ikebana" is the Japanese Art of Flower Design.

PRUNING TIPS



Correct timing is essential for pruning success and February is a great time to PRUNE. Except for spring flowering plants, the best time to prune most shrubs and trees is in late winter when they are in a completely dormant state. Pruning during dormancy greatly reduces the changes of shock to the plant.

DO NOT prune SPRING FLOWERING SHRUBS and TREES at this time of year. Azaleas, rhododendrons, dogwoods, forsythia and other plants that bloom in the spring set their flower buds in July for the following spring. If you prune now, you will cut off the flower buds and sacrifice the spring blooms. If pruning is necessary, cut back spring flowering plants and trees right after they finish their bloom cycle.

ROSES should be pruned in late February or early March when the “eyes” or buds on the canes begin to swell and turn red. Climbing roses bloom on older wood, so prune them sparingly.



LAWN CARE GUIDE

Now that your lawn is dormant, you should have given it one final edging. Keep leaves and pine straw off to prevent damage by matting leaves/pine straw.

January 15-February 15: Apply **post-**emergent for winter weeds/grasses to the Warm Season Grasses which include Bermuda, Zoysia and Centepede*.

February 15-March 15: Apply **pre-**emergent for crabgrass control to the Cool Season Grasses of Turf-type Fescue and Tall Fescue. Also, apply **pre-**emergent for crabgrass control for the Warm Season Grasses.

***Centipede lawns:** Centipede grass is ideal for the homeowner who wants a lawn that requires little care. Centipede does not need a lot of fertilizer. Fertilize **only** in spring. When using post-emergent weed killers on Centipede, **always** make sure that the product is specifically labeled for use on Centipede. Centipede can be sensitive to chemicals commonly used on other types of grasses.



WINTER GARDENING

There are many things we can do wisely to use our water and save money. We don't need to dig up the lawn or cement over it. Turfgrass helps reduce water runoff and it rids the atmosphere of carbon dioxide. Use proper techniques in landscape design, installation and routine maintenance to use water more efficiently.

Weeds are your garden's enemies. They rob precious water and nutrients from your garden. Give your garden beds a thorough cleanup and refresh the mulch. Prepare new beds by tilling and adding soil amendments. **DON'T FORGET TO GET A SOIL TEST!** Compost and ground pine bark are useful to improve our clay soils. **DO NOT** add amendments to individual planting holes. Rather, dig planting beds and add amendments to the entire bed.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- “What Now? With those sad looking holiday plants”, January 22nd, presented by CCMGs Karen Isaacson and Beverly Lester; “Growing Hellebores (the evergreen, early blooming Lenten Rose”, February 26th, presented by Henry County MG Alice Jordan and “Contain Your Vegetables” (growing vegetables in containers), March 26th, presented by CCMG and Program Assistant Tom Bonnell.

Classes are at the Extension Office, call 770-473-5434 for more information and to register. Classes are free but registration is required. Please join us!

(Tips in the Gardening Gazette are taken from Walter Reeves, Pike's Nurseries, The Garden Bench, Hasting Nature & Garden Center and Gardening 1-2-3.)