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News Article
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FEBRUARY GARDEN CHECKLIST

In this week=s article I want to mention some things gardeners need to be considering for February. The following is a garden checklist:

- T Late this month or early March prune summer flowering shrubs and hedges. Spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia should be pruned immediately after flowering.
- T Base any fertilization on a soil test. Take samples from several different spots within a particular area (example - front lawn, annual bed by entry way, vegetable garden, azalea bed, etc.) Bring pint samples of dry soil to Extension office for processing. Samples are mailed to the University of Arkansas Soils Lab in Marianna Arkansas. Free test results will be mailed to you within three weeks.
- T If you=re wondering when to apply fertilizer, it=s still a little early, in my opinion, to fertilize trees, shrubs, and grasses. Mid to late March is soon enough to fertilize fescue lawns, trees and shrubs. Summer lawns are fertilized at greenup (late April to early May).
- T Mulch strawberry beds now with straw. Keep the straw off the crowns. The straw will keep fruit from touching the soil and rotting.
- T Do any major pruning on trees any time this month. Remember you do not need to use a pruning paint or spray sealant. A clean cut will heal as quickly and in some cases quicker if left alone.
- T This is last call to apply dormant oil to fruit trees. Check label for application instructions. Speaking of fruit trees. If you have just a few trees you can wait to prune them until just before blooming. You could prune all fruit trees now except for peaches. If we get a serious cold snap, exposed wounds on peach trees can result in some major freeze damage, so its best to prune them just before bloom.
- T If you have spring fever and want to do something outdoors, cut the winter burned foliage off of liriopse and mondo grass. Also remove the dead stubble off of ornamental grasses before they resume growth.
- T Most summer and fall blooming perennials can be divided and replanted any time this month. Give extras to your garden friends.
- T Avoid salting sidewalks and steps for damage can occur to plant material. Use alternative commercial products such as sand or kitty litter for traction.
- T A gardeners remedy for winter time blues include: reviewing garden catalogs, magazines and books. Speaking of books, the Baxter County

- Master Gardeners has invested in several hundred dollars worth of gardening books which can be found in our Baxter County Library. So, visit our library and check out these wonderful books.
- T Dormant bermuda lawns can still be over sprayed this month with glyphosate (ex.-Roundup) to kill existing winter weeds when temperatures are above 50 degrees F.
- T Prune roses late this month. Remove all the dead and diseased stems first. Make all cuts angled to a strong outward-facing bud. Next, remove all weak wood that is smaller than a pencil in diameter and all canes that are growing to the center of the bush. Then shape the plant by cutting the remaining canes back to a uniform height (usually 24-30 inches). Seal all cut ends with a drop or two of glue. Also, add mulch if you need to.
- T Soak roots of bareroot trees overnight and then plant the following day. Do not fertilize the first year after planting.
- T One last point I want to let you know about is the Baxter County Master Gardener Seminar on March 13 at the Family Life Center of Redeemer Lutheran Church. Seminar topics will include flowers, ornamental grasses, vegetables, easy care roses, Baxter County Master Gardener program and a question and answer session. This year along with the Baxter County Master Gardeners, we have Dr. Kim Pittcock, Associate Professor of Horticulture from Arkansas State University, and Dr. Craig Andersen, Extension Horticulturist-Vegetables from University of Arkansas, on the program. There is a fee of \$10 per person to attend the seminar. Attendance is limited and pre-registration is required. To register: Send name, address, phone number, email address (for confirmation), and a \$10 check payable to BCMG to BCMG Seminar, 281 Lorraine Pl., Mtn. Home, AR 72653 by March 6th.

For more information on any of the above points, contact the Baxter County Cooperative Extension office at 425-2335.

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