

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:

- ✓ Late this month or early March prune summer flowering shrubs and hedges. Spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia should be pruned immediately after flowering.
- ✓ Most summer and fall blooming perennials can be divided and replanted any time this month. Give extras to your garden friends.
- ✓ Soak roots of bareroot trees overnight and then plant the following day. Do not fertilizer the first year after planting.
- ✓ You still have time to control weeds in your bermudagrass lawn. An herbicide containing glyphosate can be used on dormant bermuda lawns in February when temperatures are above 50 degrees Fahrenheit for winter weed control. Make sure your bermuda lawn is completely dormant or you will damage it.
- ✓ There are no real advantages to pruning back the canopy of ornamental trees after planting. Detrimental effects have been found from this practice including the inability for new roots to grow until shoot growth has recovered. Unless diseased or broken branches exist, leave the plants alone.
- ✓ This winter, remove bagworm bags from shrubs which were infested this past summer. Eggs were deposited within the bags by female worms, shortly before they died. Physically removing and destroying the bags will reduce or eliminate problems this summer.
- ✓ Avoid salting sidewalks and steps for damage can occur to plant material. Use alternative commercial products such as sand or kitty litter for traction.
- ✓ Enjoy spring early by pruning some whips of forsythia, quince, weigela and other spring bloomers and bring them indoors. Within a couple of weeks they will begin blooming.
- ✓ Prune hybrid tea 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 about 24 inches). Seal all cut ends with a drop or two of glue. Also, add mulch if you need to.
- ✓ September to October is the optimum time to establish tall fescue lawns. If you missed that window, an early spring seeding (late February through March) can be a reasonable second choice. Tall fescue is the only choice we have for a shady lawn grass.

- ✓ Peach leaf curl is a fungus disease with symptoms (puckering and reddening of leaves) appearing in late spring to early summer on peaches and nectarines. To prevent this disease, spray trees with a fungicide before bud swell (could be as early as mid February some winters). One application of Bordeaux mixtures, copper flowable fungicides, Kocide, liquid lime sulfur, chlorothalonil, or calcium polysulfides applied as soon as possible when temperatures are above 40 degrees F, will prevent this problem this year.
- ✓ One last point I want to let you know about is the Baxter County Master Gardener Seminar on March 8 at the Redeemer Lutheran Church Family Life Center in Mtn. Home. Seminar topics will include "Shade Gardening" (Janet Carson, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Horticulture Specialist), "Color in the Ozark Landscape" (Chris Olsen, TV Commentator and owner of Botanica Gardens in Little Rock), "Mediterranean Herbs at Home in the Ozarks" (Tina Wilcox, Head Gardener at Ozark Folk Center in Mtn. View) and "Outstanding, Easy to Grow Plants" (Lucinda Reynolds, Baxter County Advanced Master Gardener). There is a fee of \$15 per person to attend the seminar or \$20 for seminar and lunch. Attendance is limited and pre-registration is required. To register mail name, address, phone number, e-mail and check payable to BCMG to: BCMG Seminar, 1034 CR 989, Mtn. Home, AR 72653.

For more information on any of the above points, contact the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension office at 425-2335.