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Mark Keaton
County Extension Agent-
Telephone: 425-2335
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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:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Base any fertilization on a soil test. Take samples from several different spots within a particular area and mix it together. Bring a pint sample of dry soil in plastic sandwich bag to Cooperative 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 to four weeks.
- ✓ Azaleas get hit hard every year with lacebugs. These sucking insects can wreak havoc on an otherwise easy care plant. Without care, the leaves can become bronzed by late summer, and a few plants have been killed by these insects. Lacebugs don't become active until April or May—depending on the spring we have. You can begin to monitor for them, and spray as needed, but a newer product may take away any worries. Imidacloprid applied in February or early March, can give you full season control.
- ✓ Remove the dead stubble off of ornamental grasses before they resume growth.
- ✓ Late this month or early March prune summer flowering shrubs and hedges. Spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia should be pruned immediately after flowering.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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 mixture, copper hydrozide, copper, ziram, chlorothalonil, or calcium polysulfides applied as soon as possible when temperatures are above 40 degrees F, will prevent this problem this year.

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Soak roots of bareroot trees overnight and then plant the following day. Do not fertilize the first year after planting.
- ✓ Plan your garden first on paper. Measure the amount of space you have to plant your garden.
- ✓ Locate the garden near a source of water. Carrying buckets of water can be a real turnoff to even the most passionate gardener. Remember, a vegetable garden needs at least six hours of full sun each day.
- ✓ Most summer and fall blooming perennials can be divided and replanted any time this month. Give extras to your garden friends.
- ✓ February is getting near the end of the dormant season. Plants that need to be moved from one location to another benefit from being moved while they are dormant. Roses that need a transplant, would be best moved late this month after you have pruned them. The less thorns, the better. If the temperatures are cold the day you move them, be sure to wrap the root ball, and get them in the ground as quickly as possible.

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