

Bell County Master Gardener
Tip of the Week
By Mary Lew Quesinberry
“End of Winter Chores”

Forsythias are in bloom and the appearance of Daffodil leaves and swollen buds on spring blooming trees are signaling the end of winter. It is time to get our landscapes ready for the next growing season.

Remove frozen foliage on perennials like Mealy Blue Sage, Shrimp Plant, Greg’s Blue Mist, and ferns. Cut back Salvia Greggii, Skullcap and ornamental grasses like Gulf Muhly, Lemon Grass and Maiden Grass. Leaves can be raked together and then mulched (add this rich brown fertilizer to compost or spread on the lawn) Prune crossing or rubbing branches on your roses, shrubs and trees. Remove diseased or broken branches.

Roses can be reshaped or reduced by 1/3 in size with the exception of climbing roses. Climbing roses shouldn’t be pruned until after blooming. New roses can be added to your landscape. Plant antique roses or the EarthKind roses. And for the most success, plant roses in full sun. Weeds can be removed by hand or kept mowed. If you have large weedy areas under trees, mow the weeds, cover the area with landscaping fabric, and apply mulch over the fabric covered area. The weeds will rot and die from lack of light and the area will be an asset instead of an eyesore.

Now is the time to plant trees if you didn’t in the fall. If you already have lots of trees, consider planting a specimen tree such as a Japanese Maple, Anacacho Orchid Tree or Forest Pansy (Redbud). They make good understory trees, which means they will grow well in the partly shaded areas under large trees and provide a focal point to your garden.

Cool season plants, Pansies, Snapdragons, Dianthus, ornamental Cabbage and Kale; will brighten up flowerbeds. In the vegetable garden transplant broccoli, cabbage, potato, lettuce and onions while it is still cool.

Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact ask.bcmga@gmail.com

In the photo:

The brightly plumed Cardinal stands out in our drab winter gardens. Spring bulbs sprouting signal it is time to get our landscapes ready for the next growing season.

