



GARDENING IN MARCH

GARDEN TIP

- Apply pre-emergent to lawns during the first two weeks of March and water in lightly. Do not use a pre-emergent on grass planted last fall.
- Be ready to protect tender young plants from late killing frosts with frost cloths.
- Watch for fire blight in pears and apples. Branches will suddenly die back from their tips and the leaves will turn dark and stay in place. Cut out the dead branches and be sure to clean your pruners with a 10-percent bleach solution between each cut to avoid spreading the disease.

PLANT

- This is your last chance to get those cool season leafy green and root crops such as spinach, chard, turnips and beets in the ground. Plant these in the first two weeks of the month.
- Hold off on the warm season vegetables until after the average date of the last killing frost which is **March 26** in our area. These vegetables like warm soil (60 degrees or warmer), so even though you plant the seeds early, they may not germinate until later, or they could rot in the ground.
- In the landscape, decide which shrubs and trees you want to add to your yard and shop the nurseries early for the best selection. Nurseries may be able to order any special varieties you want.
- Purchase cool season annuals such as sweet alyssum as soon as they appear in the garden centers for the longest color.
- Warm-season annuals such as marigolds, moss rose, pentas and copper plants will be available later in the month. Remember, these plants like warm soil, so even if they are planted early they will sit until the soil warms up to their liking before they really start to grow. Spend this time getting your beds ready by loosening the soil, pulling winter weeds and working in needed soil amendments such as compost.

PRUNE

- Continue basic clean-up of dead or damaged branches and shaping of shrubs and trees.
- Remember, most spring-flowering shrubs such as forsythia bloom on their growth from the previous summer so do not prune your spring blooms away by cutting back the branches at this time. Wait till these shrubs finish blooming before doing any pruning or shaping.

FERTILIZE

- For pecan trees, apply an all-nitrogen fertilizer, mainly near the drip-line at one pound per inch of trunk diameter at ground level.
- Fertilize any annuals with a half dose of high-nitrogen fertilizer one week after planting.
- When the buds begin to swell on trees, shrubs and groundcovers, apply a lawn-type fertilizer.
- Avoid weed and feed products.
- Wait to fertilize spring-flowering trees and shrubs until immediately after they finish blooming.

For horticulture questions call 903-583-7453 or email fanninmastergardeners@gmail.com.

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