

February Gardening

Sally Scalera

Now that February is almost here, you may be wondering what there is to do out in the yard. January has been dry and both cold and warm so hopefully the temperatures will stay in at least the 70's for the majority of the days this month. So, if you would like an excuse to be outside, here are some ideas of things to do.

- * Now is the time to prune grape vines. Pruning can be done any time before the vines begin to sprout new buds.

- * Check your lawn mower blades to see if they need to be sharpened because spring is just around the corner.

- * Check the vegetable garden for any diseased, insect infested, or old and non-producing plants and remove them. Add organic matter like compost or aged manure to enrich the soil for new plantings.

- * Vegetables that can be planted in February include; beans, beets, cantaloupes, carrots, celery, collards, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive/escarole, English peas, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onions-both bunching and multiplier, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, squash, sweet potatoes, radishes, tomatoes, turnips, and watermelons.

- * Vegetable seeds that can be sown in February for planting in March include; beans, beets, cantaloupes, collards, cucumbers, eggplant, English peas, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, okra, onions - bunching & multipliers, peppers, pumpkins, Southern peas, squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnips, watermelon.

- * Add new mulch to the areas where the mulch is less than 2 inches deep. Be sure to keep the mulch away from the stems or trunks of the plants.

- * Mid-month is a good time to prune rose bushes. Choose 4-5 main canes to form the new shrub and prune off the others. Then, cut the main canes back a third of the way. Also, remove any dead, damaged or twiggy growth back to the main cane. New blooms should appear in about 45 days.

- * Prune poinsettias back when their blooms begin to fade. Cut the stems to about two feet from the ground and fertilize with ½ to 1 cup of 6-6-6. Also, apply one to two teaspoons of Epsom salts to supply magnesium.

- * Flowers to plant include; alyssum, dianthus, pansy, petunia, Johnny-jump-up, nasturtium, phlox, stock, flowering kale, and snapdragons.

- * Some of the herbs that can be planted now include; basil, comfrey, chervil, chives, dill, fennel, parsley, sweet marjoram, mint, sage, and thyme.

- * Bulbs that can be planted this month include; Agapanthus, Amazon lily (*Eucharis grandiflora*), Aztec lily (*Sprekelia formosissima*), caladium, canna, dahlia, gladiolus, gloriosa lily, kaffir lily (*Clivia minata*), walking iris (*Neomarica gracilis*), rainlily (*Zepheranthus* spp.), lily, African iris (*Moraea* spp.), society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*), Tritonia (*T. crocata*), tuberose (*Policanthes tuberosa*), Watsonia (*W.* spp.) and spider lily (*Hymenocallis* spp.)
- * Fertilize palms, shrubs, vines and young trees.
- * Divide and transplant perennials if they are crowded.
- * Fertilize citrus this month.