

News Article

By: John E. Woodmansee, Extension Educator, Agriculture/Natural Resources

E-mail: jwoodman@purdue.edu Phone: 260-244-7615 Web: www.extension.purdue.edu/whitley

Date: March 2, 2020

Please use by: March 12, 2020

March Lawn and Garden Activities

Are you in the mood for spring? Below are some suggested lawn, landscape and garden activities for March from Purdue Extension publication HO-91-W, "Spring Garden Calendar," by Purdue Extension consumer horticulturist, B. Rosie Lerner.

Indoor Plants & Activities

- Apply fertilizer to houseplants according to label directions as days grow brighter and longer and new growth begins. Foliage plants require a relatively high-nitrogen fertilizer, while blooming plants thrive on formulations that are higher in phosphorus.
- Remove spent leaves and flowers regularly to improve appearance and encourage more blooms.
- Start seeds of cool season plants for transplanting outdoors later in spring (early March for Northern Indiana).

Woody Landscape Plants & Fruit Trees

- Prune trees and shrubs while plants are still dormant. Those that bloom early in spring should be pruned after flowers fade.
- Fertilize woody plants before new growth begins, but wait until after soil temperatures have reached 40°F (usually in early March in Southern Indiana, and late March to early April in Northern Indiana). Two pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet should be broadcast over the entire root area.
- Remove winter coverings from roses as soon as new growth begins, but keep mulch nearby for protection from late freezes. Prune and fertilize as needed.
- Apply superior oil spray to control scale insects and mites on landscape plants and fruit trees when tips of leaves start to protrude from buds.
- Remove tree wrap from trunks to prevent scalding due to overheating of bark.

Lawn

- Rake to remove leaves, twigs, and trash.
- Mow lawn as needed. The first mowing should be slightly lower than normal to encourage green-up.

Flowers, Vegetables, & Small Fruit

- Prepare garden soil for planting. Do NOT work the soil while it is wet. Soil should crumble when squeezed in your hand when it is ready to work. If soil forms a solid ball when squeezed in your hand, it's still too wet.
- Follow last fall's soil test recommendations for fertilizer and pH adjustment. (It's not too late to soil test if you missed last year.)
- Start seeds of warm season vegetables and flowers indoors. (In North and Central Indiana, wait until end of March, early April.)
- Watch for blooms of early spring bulbs such as daffodils, squill, crocus, dwarf iris, and snowdrops.
- Remove old asparagus and rhubarb tops, and then side dress with nitrogen or manure. [Note that if using manure in the spring garden, it should be *fully composted* or *aged* manure, not fresh.]

Finally, two handy companions for you vegetable gardeners will be the Purdue Extension publications entitled, "Indiana Vegetable Planting Calendar," and "Home Gardener's Guide," available at www.edustore.purdue.edu.