

WEEKLY NEWS COLUMN
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FEBRUARY GARDEN CALENDAR

We may still be on the receiving end of colder temperatures, but February is an excellent month to begin planning. Plants outside are beginning to get ready for spring and we can, too. Finish up the garden planning and work on completing a few more outdoor tasks before the garden gets really busy. February is also a good time to give houseplants a little TLC.

Vegetables and Fruits

- Draw garden layouts to assist with the planning process.
- Review garden notes about successes and failure in the garden.
- Order seeds for spring planting.
- Select varieties and order new fruit trees.
- Take a soil test if one has not been done the last five years.
- Start broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage transplants.
- Prune:
 - o Fruit trees like apples, pears and cherries.
 - o Peach and nectarines just prior to bloom time.
 - o Grapes, raspberries, and blackberries.
- Incorporate manure or compost into garden areas for soil improvement.
- Avoid working the soil when it is wet.
- Check dates on stored seed packets. Sprout a few from each packet in a moist paper towel. Discard packets with poor results.

Flowers

- Start seeds for transplanting in the spring.
- Check fall planted perennials and water if needed.
- Watch for frost heaving of tender perennials and cover if needed.
- Replenish winter mulch around roses and other plants.
- Check bulbs in storage and discard if rotted.
- Prepare catalog orders.

Lawns

- To prevent lawn suffocation, rake fallen leaves.
- Review lawn service contracts and make changes.
- Tune up and repair the mower to get a jump on the season.
- Avoid injury to the lawn when the soil is frozen by keeping foot traffic to a minimum.

Trees and Shrubs

- Check for rabbit damage on young trees and shrubs.
- Water fall-planted trees, shrubs, and evergreens if the soil is dry and not frozen.
- Apply dormant oil for control of scale and mites.

- Prune:
 - o Begin spring pruning. However, do not prune spring flowering trees and shrubs until after bloom.
 - o Cut twigs and branches of spring shrubs and bring them indoors to add a splash of spring color.
- Carefully remove snow from limbs with a broom.
- On warm days, prepare garden soil for early planting.

Houseplants

- Check plants for insects, mites or other problems and treat as needed.
- Withhold fertilization until spring arrives.
- Remove dust build up on plants by placing in the shower and washing off.
- Water as needed, avoid letting roots set in water.
- Keep plants out of hot or cold drafts.

For more gardening information, contact the Cowley County Extension Office 221-5450, 441-4565.

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