

# March gardening calendar includes seminar and sale

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office*



PHOTO BY Dr. William M. Johnson



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This winter's rather cold weather put a hold on many gardening activities. It seemed spring would not get here soon enough.

When the "Roger Dangerfield" of landscapes trees starts to produce new leaves, I know the arrival of spring is under way. Perhaps I'm a bit harsh in assigning a Roger Dangerfield designation to the tree in reference (Arizona ash), but other horticulturists are even less kind as some call them Arizona "trash trees" because of their short life span, weak limbs and tendency to produce multiple trunks.

Arizona ash trees were commonly used in many, many local landscapes a few decades ago, but they have been

less utilized through the years because of the availability of more desirable species of landscape trees. Nevertheless, I still appreciate Arizona trees as among the first landscape trees to signal that spring is about to burst forth.

The arrival of March signals the beginning of the spring gardening season. In contrast to the sometimes icy days of February, the month of March should provide sunnier days accompanied by colorful displays of flowering trees and shrubs appearing in local landscapes. Here's a checklist of things to do for the month:

- Master Gardener Fruit Tree Seminar and Sale: One garden activity that had to be postponed because of February's cold weather conditions was

the annual Master Gardener Fruit Tree Seminar and Sale.

This event has been rescheduled for Saturday.

- Annuals: Set out copper plants, ageratum and ornamental amaranth and other annuals after mid-March.
- Repot houseplants: It's an excellent time to repot houseplants.
- Gently knock the plant out of the pot and inspect the root system.
- If the roots are crowded and matted on the outside of the root ball, put the plant in a larger pot.
- Avoid over-planting: Be selective in planting annuals

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and bedding plants.

Set out no more than you can properly care for.

For limited garden areas, try using containers on the patio or porch.

- Planting trees and shrubs: If you haven't done so already, try to finish your shrub and tree planting during March so the plants can become well established before the approach of summer heat.

Remember, don't buy and set out more plants than you have time to care for — they will suffer for it during the summer. Remember, too, proper planting and bed preparation are critical.

- Fertilize landscape trees and shrubs: March is an excellent time to fertilize established landscape trees and shrubs as they come out of their long winter dormancy period and put out new growth.

It is not necessary to punch holes in the ground to fertilize trees or shrubs or to use fertilizer spikes. Surface application of a granular fertilizer is quite satisfactory.

- Vegetables: Many types of vegetables usually can be established in the garden during mid-March, including transplants of tomatoes and peppers as well as direct-seeding of corn, cucumbers, eggplant, southern peas and many other vegetables.

Be prepared to provide cold weather protection as might be needed. Okra does not tolerate cool spells, so wait until mid-April before planting seeds.

- Weed killers and trees: Many landscape trees and shrubs are damaged or killed each year by the careless application of weed killers to lawns, including those found in mixes of weed killers and fertilizers (commonly called

weed and feed).

Always read and follow all label directions very carefully including application near the drip line of landscape trees and shrubs.

- Dividing perennials: Divide existing clumps of fall-blooming perennials, such as chrysanthemums, autumn asters, Mexican marigold mint, and physostegia (obedient plant). Separate the clumps into individual plants and set them at least 8 to 10 inches apart in groupings of five or more.

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Fruit Tree Seminar And Sale On Saturday

LA MARQUE — The Galveston County Master Gardeners has rescheduled its annual Fruit Tree Seminar and Sale for Saturday at Carbide Park's Wayne Johnson Community Center in Carbide Park, 4102 FM 519, in La Marque.

A seminar will be presented at 8 a.m. by Heidi Sheesley, of TreeSearch Farms. The plant sale will be conducted from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A wide selection of fruit tree varieties suitable for the Upper Gulf Coast area will be available for purchase, including apples, apricots, peaches, plums, nectarines and several other fruit types, which can be successfully grown in this area, including a wide variety of citrus. A wide selection of tropical fruit trees also will be available, including avocados, mangos, dragon fruit and papayas.

