

# Gardening Checklist for March

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



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**PHOTO CREDIT: Barbara L. Hankins**

**Master Gardeners will be on hand today, Wednesday, March 6, to answer gardeners' questions about growing herbs at the Gulf Coast Herb Fair. The Herb Fair takes place from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Moody Gardens Rainforest Pyramid atrium. Pictured above are Master Gardeners Lisa Belcher (left) and Mary Gonzalez.**

The first day of spring will arrive in two weeks (on Wednesday, March 20, at 4:58 p.m.). From a gardening perspective, the exact timing of "spring" is less precise.

We should remember that arrival of the spring season along the Texas Gulf Coast tends to have a bumpy landing. As I prepare this column, it's rather chilly outside and spring seems to be a dis-

tant hope as winter is not yet ready to give spring a chance. Mother Nature has been known to deliver a surprise cold snap during this time of year.





Review the following gardening checklist for things to do as the spring season arrives.

**GULF COAST HERB FAIR:** The Friends of Moody Gardens Seventh Annual Gulf Coast Herb Fair takes place today, Wednesday, March 6, in the Moody Gardens Rainforest Pyramid atrium from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. The Herb Fair will feature cooking demonstrations, selected herb education and a variety of vendors, including Galveston County Master Gardeners, showcasing their herbs, books, food items and gifts available for sale.

The Herb Fair will be celebrating garlic for this fair's theme herb. The highlight of the Herb Fair is the luncheon at 11:30, featuring Concetta Maceo-Sims, of the Maceo Spice & Import Co. Ms. Maceo-Sims, who favors garlic on everything, will discuss how she includes and uses this seasoning fresh, whole, roasted, ground and diced.

Proceeds from the Herb Fair and luncheon benefit Galveston's children and seniors by planting seeds of education. All funds from this event will be used to bring local school children on field trips to the Aquarium and Rainforest Pyramids at Moody Gardens and to send outreach programs to seniors and preschools throughout the Galveston area.

Master Gardeners will also be available to answer visitors' ques-

tions on growing and using herbs. Admission to the morning events is free, and the luncheon tickets are available for \$35 per person, \$45 at the door.

**MASTER GARDENER GREEN-**

**HOUSE PLANT SALE:** The Master Gardeners will be conducting a greenhouse-grown plant sale from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 14, at the Discovery Garden located in Carbide Park (4102 Main Street) in La Marque. A wide selection of annuals including angelonias (aka Summer Snapdragon), New Guinea impatiens, salvias and pentas and other annuals will be available.

**ANNUALS:** Copper plants, ageratum and ornamental amaranth and other annuals can be set out.

**FERTILIZE LANDSCAPE TREES AND**

**SHRUBS:** March is an excellent time to fertilize established landscape trees and shrubs as they come out of their 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 and an even better practice.

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

Be prepared to provide cold weather protection as needed. It is still too early to plant okra as okra does not tolerate cool spells. Wait until mid-April before planting okra seeds.

**LAWNS:** Yes, most area St. Augustine lawns are dull brown in color because of cool weather conditions over the past few months. However, do not fertilize St. Augustine lawns now in the hope of making it green up faster. St. Augustine lawns should not be fertilized this time of year until after the grass starts to actively grow; otherwise, if you fertilize now you will be benefitting winter weeds and some of the nitrogen will be lost before lawn growth starts.

**HANGING BASKETS:** Late March is an ideal time to set out hanging baskets. The variety of plants that can be used is limited only by your imagination. Suitable plants for hanging baskets include portulaca, ivy, geraniums, airplane plant, bougainvillea, English ivy, begonias, and a host of others.

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

