

# February's Gardening Calendar

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



February 5, 2020



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**PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson**

**Due to mild winter temperatures this year, peach trees have already started to display their beautiful flowers and the promise of spring can be seen.**

Nighttime temperatures into the lower forties requiring heating units to operate? Check! Daytime temperatures into the upper seventies requiring AC units to operate. Check! Extended days of cloudiness and heavy rainfall days? Check! Wind gusts to 41 mph (in the Discovery Garden located in Carbine Park). Check! Then a cool but beautiful week-

end with sun-filled days. Double check that one!

Overall, the winter season has been a bit weird especially when air conditioning is required on a given winter day and heating is needed during that night. (I grew up in Virginia and that seldom happens over most winter seasons there.) Nevertheless, I still enjoy our winter (and

spring and fall) seasons along the Texas Gulf Coast.

Over the next few weeks, landscapes will be blanketed with new leaves in varying shades of green and an array of colorful flowers to lift our spirits. Many local landscapes have peach and plum trees provided welcome glimpses of



flowers. I took the photo accompanying this article during the late afternoon of mid-January day. Even so, one determined and brave honey bee was foraging for nectar and pollen on that cool day (honey bees cannot fly very well when air temperatures drop below 55°F).

Even though the 2020 spring season does not officially start until March 19 at 11:49 p.m., the new gardening year will be in full swing in February with many activities and options for growing and learning.

**Hands-on Practice Demonstration Series: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 6,** Galveston County Master Gardeners will demonstrate a variety of useful tips for growing and maintaining your garden. Learn about "Fig Tree Pruning and Care" by Robert Marshall, "Avocado Winterizing and Sun Protection" by Julie Cartmill, and "Garden Tool Care and Use" by Tim Jahnke. This program will be held in the Discovery Garden located inside Carbide Park (4102 Main Street in La Marque). Register by e-mail ([galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com)) or phone (281-309-5065).

**Potatoes:** Irish potatoes are not grown from seed like most other vegetables. Instead, pieces from the potato itself are used to start new plants. Home gardeners should purchase good seed potatoes that are free of disease and chemicals. Do not buy potatoes from a grocery store for planting.

Seed potatoes contain buds or "eyes" which sprout and grow into plants. Seed potatoes will be on sale at the Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale to be conducted at the County Fairgrounds in Hitchcock on Saturday, February 15. Whether you purchase seed potatoes at the plant sale or elsewhere, this is a reminder to get them in the ground by mid-February. Recommended varieties for our growing area include Red LaSota (which will be available at the Spring Plant Sale) and Kennebec (a white-skinned variety).

**Lawns:** Yes, most area St. Augustine lawns are dull brown in color because of our on-and-off periods of cool weather conditions. 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.

**Vegetables:** The recommended time period to set out transplants of broccoli and cabbage is February 1 - March 15. Given the mild winter weather conditions this year, I recommend setting these vegetables out as soon as possible. Beets, carrots, collards, Swiss chard, lettuce, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, English peas, radish, spinach and turnips can be planted throughout the month of February.

**Gladiolus:** I'm determined to start planting my gladiolus bulbs soon this year to extend the flowering season. Begin planting gladiolus bulbs from mid-February into March. Space planting dates at two week intervals to extend the flowering season. Their wide range of vibrant colors, sizes and flower types make gladiolus flowers particularly useful for flower arrangements.

### Upcoming Programs

**Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale & Seminar:** 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 15, at the Galveston County Fairgrounds in Hitchcock, TX. Visit the Master Gardener website (<https://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>) for details and timely updates.

**Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening Seminar:** 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 8, at the AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park (4102-B Main in La Marque). Register by e-mail ([galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com)) or phone (281-309-5065).

**Growing Backyard Citrus Seminar:** 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 8, at the AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park (4102-B Main in La Marque). Register by e-mail ([galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com)) or phone (281-309-5065).