

February's Gardening Calendar

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



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PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson

Even though it's February and still winter, many peach trees started setting out flowers and the promise of spring can be felt.

Even though the 2021 spring season does not officially start until March 20 at 4:37 a.m., the new gardening year will be in full swing in February with many activities and options for growing and learning. Over the next few weeks, landscape trees and shrubs 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 in partial bloom. I

took the photo accompanying this article over the past weekend. 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).

Check the following list for gardening chores during February.

Spring Plant Sale: This year's Spring Plant Sale will be conducted online. Browse available plants for

sale starting February 12. The online store will open for purchases from 12:00 p.m., February 19 to 12:00 p.m., February 20.

For directions and other information, visit the MG website (<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>) homepage then click on the link titled "Visit our Online Store."

Sweet Corn: Sweet corn can be planted in mid-February to get an early harvest of tasty corn-on-the-



cob. If you're a sweet corn connoisseur, plant at weekly intervals thereafter up to mid-June to extend the harvest season.

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 quality 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 (see above for more information). Whether you purchase seed potatoes at the plant sale or elsewhere, this is a reminder to get them in the ground by mid-February.

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.

Gladiolus: Begin planting gladiolus bulbs from mid-February into March. Space planting dates at 2-

week intervals to extend the flower season. Their wide range of vibrant colors, sizes and flower types make gladiolus flowers particularly useful for flower arrangements.

Raised Beds. Consider building a raised bed for the vegetable garden if the existing garden site has poor soil drainage. Rainy weather can make such raised beds well worth the effort when it's time to plant in spring.

New Trees and Shrubs: When buying plants, the biggest is not always the best, especially when dealing with bare-root plants. Medium to small size trees (6-to-8 feet) are usually faster to become established and more effective in the landscape than larger sizes. Don't fertilize newly set out trees or shrubs until after they have started to grow, and then only very lightly the first year.

Stone Fruits: Fertilize stone fruit trees by late February. The general recommendation for fertilizer for bearing stone fruit trees is to apply two cups of a balanced fertilizer per inch of trunk in February. A second application is recommended in mid-May. A fertilizer such as 15-5-10 (commonly used for lawns) is suitable for use on fruit trees and also for shrubs and landscape trees. Spread fertilizer evenly under the drip line but keep six inches away from the trunk. Be sure to avoid using a weed-and-feed fertilizer that has a herbicide (s) as an ingredient.

Upcoming Programs

Growing Great Tomatoes, Part 2 of 3 Parts: Presented online on Friday, February 5, from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Chile Peppers from A TO Z: Presented online on Friday, February 12, from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Growing Peaches in Galveston County: Presented online on Friday, February 26, from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

All seminars conducted online by Zoom. Preregistration is required by 3:00 p.m. the day before each seminar. Visit the MG website (<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/>) homepage then click on the link titled "Gulf Coast Gardening Upcoming Educational Seminars" for additional directions.