

Central Virginia Master Gardeners
February Garden Chores

*The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.*

~Dorothy Frances Gurney, "Garden Thoughts"

Category	Description
Look out for unusually cold weather	<p>February can be cold, damp, snowy and occasionally quite nice in Central Virginia. With a little luck you may see crocuses, winter jasmine and snowdrops breaking through the leaf litter by the end of the month. In the event of snow, be sure to shake or brush off the white stuff from the branches of your evergreens and shrubs. Don't let it build up.</p> <p>Don't forget to feed the birds! Think about participating in the Great American Backyard Bird Count that usually takes place the second weekend in February.</p>
	<p>Although winter is far from being over, it's time to start thinking about spring and spring chores. However, if the weather forecasts call for unusually cold weather (and that happens a lot in February) cover early flowering plants with cloth, pots, plastic water bottles, whatever is handy, but don't forget to remove them when the weather becomes more moderate.</p>
Shrubs and Trees	<p>It's still not too late to transplant deciduous shrubs and trees as long as the buds haven't begun to swell.</p>
	<p>If you didn't fertilize trees in the fall it's time to deep feed them by drilling a series of 1-2 inch holes about two feet apart around the drip line and filling them with a good fertilizer. Composted manure is also good for your trees.</p>
Mid to late February	<p>This is the time to fertilize evergreens and shrubs. Use an acid fertilizer for rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, conifers, broad leaf evergreens.</p> <p>Use an all-purpose fertilizer for your roses and other</p>

	deciduous trees and shrubs.
Apply dormant fruit spray now	If you haven't applied dormant fruit spray, now IS THE TIME to do it.
Prune	<p>Walk through your garden and prune out or trim any winter damaged limbs and pick up deadfall. It's too late to prune spring-flowering shrubs and flowers, but you can prune summer flowering shrubs,</p> <p>Deciduous vines like honeysuckle should be pruned and shaped.</p> <p>Climbing roses should be thinned out and dead/tangled canes should be removed.</p>
Perennials annuals and bulbs	<p>As you walk through your garden, if any plants have been pushed out of the ground by frost, you should press them firmly back into place. Adding more mulch can also help.</p> <p>It's time to plant daylilies, bleeding hearts and plantain lilies. Most perennials may be divided now (especially toward the end of the month when the weather becomes a little milder).</p> <p>For the tender perennials you've kept in the garage such as Fuchsias and geraniums, check to see if they need water. Don't give them a lot, but moisten them.</p>

Fruits and veggies

Rhubarb, horseradish, asparagus and artichokes can be planted this month.

Kiwis and grapes must be pruned by Valentines day to prevent sap 'bleeding'.

Strawberries can be planted as soon as they become available.

Cane fruits (raspberries and blackberries)

, with the exception of everbearers should have all the canes which produced fruit last year removed.

If you grow currants, remove all trunks which are over 3 years old.

The vegetable garden should get its first tilling (*if weather permits*) to allow the weather to aid you in breaking up the dirt clods. Exposed weeds and seeds hopefully will perish. See [Creating a new garden](#).

Odds and ends

House plants may notice the longer days, and begin growing. You can begin feeding them again, but use a dilute 50% fertilizer mix until the growth is robust.

Continue feeding our feathered friends, you'll want them to stick around to help you in insect control when the weather warms again.

Did you check your garden tools yet? Don't wait 'til the spring rush to get your mower back in shape!

It's time to turn the compost pile!

Have a great gardening day!



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