


Central Virginia Master Gardeners
March Garden Chores

*One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides.
~W.E. Johns, The Passing Show*

I can't wait for Spring!
Jackie Rowe

Category	Description
Ornamental Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early spring is a time of restraint when it comes to removing winter mulches. With the first warm days of March it is a temptation to remove the winter mulches. However, it is always a good practice to loosen it so that it will dry and allow the air to penetrate. It is always better to be too late with this removal than too early.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cut back ornamental grasses and compost the old growth. Use clippers on small clumps and hedgers or chain saws on the large clumps. Be careful!
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get out and rake leaves and debris from your garden beds. It is much easier to do this now before your spring bulbs come up and flower or the new growth begins on your perennials.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you haven't already done this, remove last year's dead foliage from your hosta, daylilies, iris, and peonies. Clear this from the garden - do not compost it as it probably harbors insects and disease. Many compost piles do not get hot enough to kill these pests and diseases.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cut back certain evergreen perennials like <i>Liriope</i> and <i>Epimedium</i> early this month before new growth begins. Once these begin to grow in the spring, it's difficult and time consuming to trim the old foliage.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most roses appreciate a good pruning now, but consult a good pruning book first as pruning requirement vary based upon the type of roses you have
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fruit trees, evergreens, many deciduous trees, raspberry canes, grapevines and more can all be trimmed and shaped before new growth begins.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't forget to clean out your birdhouses early before the birds

	begin nesting again
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As soon as the first leaves surface on your butterfly bush and bluebeard, you can prune them back as well to spur new growth and bountiful blooms. This may be an April task depending upon how our early late spring is this year.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get a jump on the season by edging and weeding your beds. By digging and teasing out weeds now when they are small, you save yourself countless hours of weeding in the summer heat.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start watering trees and shrubs that you planted in the fall as soon as new leaves appear. Newly planted trees and shrubs need supplemental watering for a FULL YEAR to stay healthy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your garden tools ready? If not, check them, fix them, sharpen them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When nighttime temperatures are forecast to remain above 40 degrees F. for 2-3 days, spray your fruit trees, roses, and other ornamental trees and shrubs with dormant overwintering insects, eggs, and immature insect stages. The best time is a dull, still day when the temperature is just above 40 degrees and BEFORE buds swell. Later in the month spray apples, peaches, and pears that have been affected with canker problems 
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your peonies were affected by botrytis last year, spray the emerging shoots with a fungicide like Mancozeb, liquid copper or Daconil. Always read and follow the label directions!
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sow seeds of hardy annuals Sow seeds of frost-tolerant perennials Sow sweet peas Set out summer-flowering bulbs