

# FEBRUARY 2021

## GARDENING TIPS

“Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas”.

- Elizabeth Murray

Annuals, Perennials – Yippee!!! It’s time to start sowing seeds indoors!!! Sow warm season annuals, hardy spring blooming annuals, and warm season vegetables. Plant, and/or transplant cool season vegetable seedlings that you may have already sown. Cool weather root crop seeds like radish, turnip, beet, and carrot can all be sown directly into the garden 4-6 weeks before last frost. We have a lot of seeds to choose from, and seed starting material as well. If you haven’t ordered

from a catalog yet, and are looking for special varieties of seeds, don't hesitate, as they may sell out early. Plan your summer garden with the young sprouts in your life! Teaching children how fun and easy it is to grow a garden of their own not only encourages healthy eating, but it teaches responsibility and gets them outdoors. Care for ornamental grasses by cutting them back before new growth appears. To make the job easier (and neater), tie each plant in a bundle, then gut them back to about 6" above the ground. Be on the lookout for hellebores blooming in the surrounding landscapes and consider growing them in your garden this spring. These dappled-shade loving perennials are best planted in beds or around trees and shrubs so their blooms can be enjoyed during the winter.

**Bulbs** - Spring flowering bulbs are eagerly waiting to pop up and make you smile such as muscari, crocus, snow drops to name a few. Pot up stored tubers such as begonia and canna.

**Houseplants** - Winter weary houseplants could use some TLC. Clean up and remove any dead or weak growth and sick looking leaves. Indoor plants are known to be dust magnets. Rinse off small plants in the sink with a gentle, steady stream of water. Larger plants, if moveable, can be placed in the shower. We sell plant caddys on caster wheels to help move large plants. Continue to check for insects, disease, and fertilize at half strength monthly. When watering, its best to give your plants a quarter turn so that it doesn't get leggy reaching for the light. Pinch back new growth to promote bushy

plants. During the winter months, most homes are too dry for plants. Humidity may be increased by placing plants on trays lined with pebbles with a small amount of water just below the pot. If you heat with wood, keep a pot of water on the stove. The added moisture will be healthier for you as well as your plants. To clean crusty clay pots, add one cup each of white vinegar and bleach to one gallon of warm water and soak the pots. For heavily crusted pots, scrub with a steel wool pad after soaking for 12 hours. As Valentine's Day approaches, we will be carrying a wide variety of gift plants including, but not limited to, anthurium, orchids, African violets, jasmine, gardenia, mini roses, and primrose.

**Lawns** - Perform maintenance tasks on equipment such as; sharpening your

mower blade, clean spreader, sharpen pruning tools, etc. You may also consider painting the handles of gardening tools red or orange. This will preserve the wood and make the tools easier to locate during the seasons when you lay them down in the garden or on lawn.

**Trees, Shrubs** - If you get a warm sunny day, grab your pruners to do structural pruning by removing any dead, diseased or rubbing branches. Fruit trees and crape myrtles will greatly benefit by this. Crape myrtles should not be 'hat racked' (crape murder), as research has found this does not lead to more flowers. Only prune branches that are 3x's the diameter of a No. 2 pencil or less. Make sure your pruners are clean and sharp before you start. Have large trees pruned by professional arborists. The skeletal

structure this time of year makes it easier for arborists to locate very heavy limbs. Extra long limbs can break easily under stress from ice storms and upcoming March winds. It's better to be safe than sorry! Now is the time to scout and remove any leftover bagworms on your evergreens. Use a sharp pair of pruners or remove them by hand. Throw away - do not compost these egg filled sacks or leave them around the base of trees! Continue using dormant oil or neem oil for control of insects and diseases, especially on fruit trees. Only apply when temperatures are above 50 degrees. Force outdoor flowering branches for indoor enjoyment. Clip vase-sized branches from pussy willow, quince, and forsythia for example. Place them in water and watch the magic unfold. The indoor warmth will

trick them into bloom. Take care not to shovel road salt laden snow piles onto your lawn and landscape!  
Get outside and enjoy! Maria