



Dear Extension's Successful Gardener E-tips Subscribers:

Cooperative Extension will present "Successful Lawns and Landscapes," from 10 a.m. to Noon, on Saturday, Feb. 24, at the Triad Home Show at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem.

Next week, starting on Feb. 28, we'll kick off spring at the Southern Spring Home & Garden Show at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart. The show runs through March 4. March 2 is *Extension's Successful Gardener* and Master Gardener Day, with a line-up of great speakers and activities. We will also be at shows in Greensboro, Fayetteville and Raleigh. Visit us at one of the home and garden shows and learn about research-based gardening techniques that work for North Carolina. Several dates are posted at the end of this month's gardening tips.

Special Thanks to our January/February Newsletter Sponsor

Thanks to Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, the sponsor of our January/February issue. Ask for it now at your local garden center or order you own subscription at www.successfulgardener.org.

February Gardening Tips

Ornamentals

- Check your houseplants for insects. After a few months inside a heated house, insects such as mites, scale and mealybugs are multiplying rapidly. Use insecticidal soap to control these insects.
- When purchasing bare root plants, unwrap the roots and soak the plants in water for up to 12 hours before planting. Also, cut off any broken roots or stems before planting.
- Lightly prune boxwoods during late February.

- If you have not pruned your butterfly bush, *Buddleia davidii*, do so during February. It only blooms on new growth. Pruning during the winter encourages new growth in spring.
- Remove damaged or broken limbs from your trees.
- Cut back your liriope. The easiest way to accomplish this is to mow the liriope with a lawnmower.
- Daffodils are blooming now. If you want to use cut daffodils in your arrangements then soak them in water by themselves for 4 to 6 hours before placing them with other flowers. The sap from the daffodil stems will clog the stem and water of other flowers if not presoaked.
- Remove any old camellia blooms to prevent the spread of petal blight. Also clean any dead blooms off the ground around the camellias.
- Read a gardening book on a day when it is too cold to have fun outside.
- Finish cleaning up any seedheads left for birds in the perennial garden. Cut back old foliage on grasses and most perennials. The exceptions are lantana, verbena, salvia and anything with a hollow stem that extends down into the ground. Wait until March to cut them back.
- Bring spring indoors early by forcing branches of forsythia, quince, spirea and winter honeysuckle. Place stems in a vase of water and watch them open well before those in the landscape.

Edibles

- Start dormant pruning on apples, pears and grapes. Most fruits can be pruned in February.
- February is a good time to start tomato, pepper and eggplant seeds indoors. Wait until 3 or 4 weeks before the 90 percent frost-free date to start cucumbers, melons and squash.
- There is still time to soil test. Contact your county Cooperative Extension Center for details.
- Cooperative Extension has gotten several questions about use of manure. One concern is safety. The best manure comes from herbivores such as cows and horses. Manure from chickens or pigs can also be used. Don't use manure from cats or dogs. We recommend a 90-day period between application and harvest. Another concern is the introduction of weed seeds. Manure sometimes contains seeds. Even when it doesn't contain seeds, it stimulates seeds that are already

present in the soil. Hot composting the manure with other materials will reduce weed seeds, but you still need a plan to control weeds.

Lawns

- Cool-season grasses like tall fescue can be fertilized toward the end of February. Don't fertilize later than March.
- Preemergent crabgrass preventer can go on cool-season lawns toward the end of February.

Extension's Successful Gardener Learning Centers and Seminars

- **Feb. 23 – 25, Triad Home Show, Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem.** Saturday, Feb. 24 will feature *Extension's Successful Gardener* seminars "Successful Lawns and Landscapes," from 10 a.m. to Noon. Extension agents and Master Gardeners will be available to answer your gardening questions throughout the show.
- **Feb. 28 – March 4, Southern Spring Home & Garden Show, Charlotte Merchandise Mart.** Every day features *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center. Friday, March 2, is *Extension's Successful Gardener* and Master Gardener Day and will feature seminars by Bryce Lane of In the Garden with Bryce Lane TV show, Todd Meier of Fine Gardening magazine, and Linda Blue and Jim Monroe, N.C. Cooperative Extension horticulture agents and members of the *Successful Gardener* team. The day will feature a container gardening contest and a showcase of winning Extension Master Gardener volunteer efforts.
- **March 9 – 11, Southern Ideal Home Show, Greensboro Coliseum.** Will feature *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center and seminars, and a container gardening contest.
- **March 23 – 25, Carolina Home & Garden Show, Cumberland County Crown Center, Fayetteville.**
- **April 13 – 15, Southern Ideal Home Show, State Fairgrounds, Raleigh.** Will feature *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center and container gardening contest.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension

We offer educational programs in all 100 North Carolina counties and the Cherokee Reservation. Visit www.ces.ncsu.edu and click on County Centers to learn more about programs in your county and to find local contact information.

Until next month, Happy Successful Gardening!

