

February in the Garden

Planning

Start a garden notebook or computer log and vow to use it all year. The information you track from this year's garden will benefit next year's. Note which perennials bloom together and how long they bloom. Start planning planting schedules for vegetables and annuals.

Research dates of home and garden shows for the coming months. Think about things in your yard you want to change and look for ways to make those improvements.

Planting

If you have large fluorescent lights available you can start parsley, onion seeds, broccoli, head lettuce, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, most herbs and cool season flowers (pansies and alyssum) now so they will be good-sized by spring planting. You can also start petunias and seed geraniums. Popular perennials like aubrietia, arabis, basket of gold, and dianthus are easy to grow from seed and much less expensive than buying transplants.

Add manure or compost to your soil as soon as the soil is workable. This will allow time for the salts to leach out and ammonia to dissipate before it is time to plant.

When starting plants indoors, remember warm temperatures, not hot, will encourage best germination. Also, a sterile seeding mix will help your new plants off to a good start.

Inside and Out

Repot houseplants this month. Provide as much sunlight and fresh air to them as possible. Check for disease and insects. A good cleaning under a soft spray of water from the sink or the bathtub faucet will do wonders. Cut back leggy or straggly plants. Slowly increase water and begin fertilizing in late February or as soon as you see some new growth.

Finish sharpening and cleaning your tools if you haven't already.

Stock your gardening library with publications that can help you grow as a gardener. Your local Extension Office has many such books and booklets. The more you learn as a gardener, you'll see, the better your garden will grow.

Let your windows and your imagination take you outdoors during our long winter season.

Lawn and Garden

If the weather is mild, conditions for peach leaf curl disease development may be right. This fungus disease curls, distorts and reddens leaves and can affect peach trees as soon as buds start swelling. Use sprays of lime sulfur or fungicide now. By late spring or early summer when symptoms are evident the fungicide sprays will be ineffective. Contact your local Extension office for more specific information if you're concerned about this disease.

You can still do some winter pruning of fruit trees and/or deciduous hedges if conditions are appropriate. Remove leaves and debris from your yard and from around shrubs to minimize diseases. Birches bent from heavy snow loads should be righted as soon as possible.