

Monthly Garden Chores

January

Plant asparagus roots.

Spray fruit trees with dormant oil.

Check for scale on bay laurel, camellias and euonymus. Look for brown dots adhered to the backs of the leaves. If seen, spray infested plants with dormant oil, especially coating the undersides of the leaves.

Fertilize pansies and violas to keep them blooming.

February

Cut back dormant perennials and ornamental grasses before new growth emerges.

Plant onions and potato starts and sow seeds of radishes, spinach, peas, carrots, broccoli, beets and turnips.

Plant fruit trees and berry bushes to give them a good start before they start flowering.

Dig and divide overgrown summer and fall blooming bulbs and perennials.

Prune deciduous trees now if needed. Do not top your trees (cut the main trunk).

Prune shrub roses and bush roses mid-month.

Prune back 25% for many blooms, prune 50% for fewer, but larger flowers.

March

Apply granular baits for fire ants and grasshoppers starting this month.

Plant summer vegetables except tomatoes, peppers, okra and melons. Wait until April to plant those heat-loving veggies.

Finish pruning all evergreen and summer flowering trees and shrubs. Do not prune hydrangeas until after they bloom.

Fertilize flower beds and shrubs with organic fertilizer.

Keep mulch on tender perennials until after the last frost.

Top dress with compost where needed to pump up the bed.

Check for aphids on new growth. Spray with neem oil or insecticidal soap.

April

Put out basil, tomatoes, peppers, green beans, Southern peas (black-eyed, cream, purple hull), and melons after the middle of the month.

Move houseplants outside to a shady location.

Add 2 to 3 inches of compost to established beds to fortify the soil. Then add a thick layer of mulch to discourage weeds and keep soil moist.

Prune spring blooming shrubs such as spiraea, forsythia and azaleas if needed after they have finished blooming.

Fertilize azaleas and camellias when they finish blooming.

May

Deadhead roses to encourage them to re-bloom.

Plant okra, sweet potatoes, watermelon and southern peas.

Fertilize vegetables every few weeks with organic fertilizer to keep them flowering and producing well.

Harvest vegetables at least every other day as they ripen. If you quit picking, they quit producing.

Keep beds mulched to retain moisture and discourage weeds.

Look for signs of lacebugs on azaleas, boxwood and oaks. Leaves will turn tan and have black specks on the undersides. Spray with an all-season horticultural oil or general purpose insecticide.

Put out Nolo bait for control of grasshoppers.

June

Fertilize flower beds early this month to get them strong to survive the heat of summer.

Cut back (by up to one third) fall blooming perennials like Mexican Bush Sage, mums and hardy Fall Aster. This will make them bush out and have more flowers in autumn.

Take extra vegetables from your garden to the local food bank.

July

For fall tomatoes, put out new plants by mid month. For established tomatoes that have quit producing, cut plants back to young new foliage at the bottom.

Water plants thoroughly to wet the entire root system.

If your container plants need a boost of fertilizer, top-dress the soil with earthworm castings.

Do not fertilize a dry plant as this could burn the roots. Water the plant first with clear water then fertilize. If using a dry, granular fertilizer, water again after applying.

If your plants are drying out too fast in the ground apply a layer of compost and pile on the mulch.

Take the time to can or freeze some of the great fresh foods available. Preserve their flavor for use in fall and winter.

August

Plant the following vegetables mid-month for your fall garden: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, Swiss chard, kale and English peas.

Trim roses by about one third to encourage more flowers in the fall. Rake up fallen rose leaves and petals so as not to spread insects and disease.

Apply a thick layer of mulch on beds and even in pots to keep moisture in and roots cool.

Water deeply when watering and always pay attention to your landscape to make sure everything is getting adequate moisture.

Don't forget to fertilize your potted plants every few weeks when you are watering daily.

September

Fertilize flower beds, lawns and garden before the end of the month.

Fertilize flower pots now for attractive fall color. Our favorite container fertilizer is earthworm castings. It has no smell and a light dusting on the soil is easy to apply.

Plant fall vegetables: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and Brussels sprouts.

Plant evergreen herbs: salad burnet, leaf celery, lavender, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme. You can use them all winter.

Plant perennial herbs; catnip, chives, lemon balm, mint, oregano. Although they will freeze back in the winter, they will return bigger and stronger in spring.

Divide spring blooming perennials like Iris and creeping phlox now.

Use Bt on any plants attacked by cabbage loopers, a common fall occurrence.

October

Move houseplants inside this month. Groom and spray them with horticultural oil to safe guard against bringing insects inside.

By mid-month plant cool season annuals: Pansies, Cyclamen, Dianthus, Snapdragons, Violas, kale and ornamental cabbage.

Plant spring blooming bulbs that do not need pre-chilling like daffodils, grape hyacinths and snowflakes (Leucojum).

Organize your thoughts while everything is big and fluffy for next month's chores. Make lists of plants to transplant, divide or remove completely.

Harvest any summer herbs for drying or freezing before the first frost.

Plant fruit trees and berry bushes this month.

November

Be sure your beds have at least 2 inches of mulch on them to help protect your plants' roots from freezing temperatures.

Cut back perennials as they freeze and mulch well with leaves or pine needles if the plants are tender here.

Plant Amaryllis and paperwhites bulbs for holiday color.

This is a great time to plant trees and shrubs.

Drain outdoor hoses and fountains before the first freeze.

Water plants before hard freezes if the ground is dry.

December

Place Poinsettia plants indoors away from drafts. Keep evenly moist.

Plant daffodil and pre-chilled tulip bulbs this month for spring bloom.

Turn automatic sprinkler systems to manual but don't forget to run them if we go several weeks without rain.

Clean, sharpen and oil your hand tools to have them ready to go in the spring.

Plant paperwhite bulbs the first of the month to have them blooming for Christmas.

Blue Moon Gardens 13062 FM 279 Chandler, TX 75758 903-852-3897 bluemoongardens.com