

March Gardening Calendar

February 20, 2017

Tomato transplants are available at area nurseries. Use selections such as the new Rodeo tomato-HM 1823, Tycoon, Red Deuce, Celebrity, Valley Cat, Phoenix, 444 and BHN 968 that grow quickly to their final size and then concentrate on setting fruit. Wait until late March to plant tomatoes in the garden, the soil is too cold for good growth. If you want to buy your transplants early when the selection is best, “pot them up” in a one gallon container filled with potting mix and fertilized with Osmocote. Place the potted tomatoes in a sunny location out of the wind until the weather and soil temperatures warm up in late March or April. If temps of 40 degrees or colder are forecast, move the plants inside until things warm up. Other warm weather vegetables such as sweet corn, green beans, summer squash and cucumbers can also be planted in the vegetable garden in March.

It is too early to fertilize the grass (the winter weeds would love it!) but there are other important tasks to complete on the lawn in early March. Aerate and top dress with compost to address compact soil and to incorporate organic material into the root area of the grass plants. Many of the big box stores and some mulch/compost suppliers have aerators available. Apply one half inch of compost to the lawn. I recommend compost rather than “top dressing” because the top dressing is diluted with sand. The compost is the active ingredient.

It is also time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent summer weeds if your lawn was full of sand burs or crabgrass last summer. Amaze, Dimension and XL are effective products. Consider the product

Weed Free Zone for winter weeds like bedstraw. Follow label instructions.

In the flower garden the snapdragons should have resumed their bloom after the mid-winter break. Naturalized larkspur will attempt to take over in any garden where they exist. I always leave two rows and pull out the rest. They are aggressive and tall enough to grow over the top of the tallest snapdragons.

Zinnias can be seeded and transplanted into the flower bed in March. They make excellent cut flowers plus are a favorite source of nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies. The seed-eating birds also like zinnias. In the shade consider pentas and begonias for summer color that can be planted in March

It is time to prune back all freeze killed plant tops plus complete pruning roses, fruit trees and other landscape plants. Visit plantanswer.com for detailed instructions and diagrams.

By mid-month it should be clear how much of your citrus trees were damaged by the cold. Expect Mexican limes to lose the entire top but most should sprout from their roots (if they are on their own roots!) Lemons will probably have some top damage. Prune out the dead wood.

It is still a good time to plant shade trees and shrubs. Take advantage of the CPS shade tree rebate.