

Gardening Calendar for March

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Lots of action in San Antonio landscapes and gardens.

On the lawn it is too early to fertilize but there is potential for weed control. Wait to fertilize until you have mowed real grass twice, usually in late April.

If you were bothered by sand burs last year it is time to take action to prevent production of new burs. Apply a preemergent herbicide such as Amaze, XL or Dimension as soon as possible. Sandburs germinate over a long period during the growing season so make a note on your calendar that you need to apply another dose on about June 1.

For the current weeds one of the most effective contact herbicides seems to be Weed-Free Zone. It is designed to spray on broadleaf weeds such as bedstraw, henbit, chickweed, thistle and dandelion. One of its desirable characteristics is its ability to function at lower temperatures than the other broadleaf herbicides. Use it for weeds in the lawn, but, of course, don't spray it near the flowers and vegetables in your gardens. Be very careful if you use it in the shrub border.

Weed-Free Zone is available in a hose end version and a pre-mixed hand sprayer version in addition to concentrate. If you use a pesticide, follow the label instructions.

Another effective strategy with winter weeds to keep them mowed with the lawn mower or string mower. Rescue grass and annual blue grass make an attractive winter lawn when they are mowed, and the mowing reduces seed head production. For your broadleaf weeds hand pulling works well and it is essential to free your flowers and vegetables from entanglement in bedstraw, henbit, and chickweed. The desirable foliage decomposes when it is covered by the lush, suffocating weeds.

For gardeners that potted up the Rodeo Tomato (Red Snapper) or other desirable varieties you can start planting them in the garden now. The soil has usually warmed up enough by the first of March. Just in case, wait and plant a portion of your transplants through the month.

Other tomato varieties to consider are Tycoon, Valley Cat, Celebrity, and BHN 968. They were past Rodeo tomato picks, and all are nematode resistant. HM 8849 was last year's Rodeo selection.

In addition to tomatoes plant green beans and summer squash by seed for the spring. If you have had trouble with squash vine borers on your squash plants, try the tatura (Mexican squash). It tastes like summer squash and is very productive without being preyed on by the borers. Sometime this spring the winter greens will decline but expect your Swiss chard, spinach, and Brussels sprouts to remain tasty.

The winter flowers should perform well in March. The sweet peas will finally make a splash and the wildflowers will be blooming. Look for blue curl and note its attractiveness as a nectar source to the butterflies. When the first monarchs show up it will be as popular to them as early milkweed.

Peaches and other tree fruit are susceptible to damage by insect and disease pests. To produce blemish free fruit, begin your spray program when the bloom petals fall. There are fungicides and insecticides labeled for the job at your favorite nursery.

Don't put your freeze cloth and heat sources too far out of reach, it is not uncommon for us to receive freezes in March.