

February Garden Guide

- * Order perennial plants and bulbs now for cut flowers this summer. Particularly good choices are phlox, daisies, coreopsis, asters and lilies.
- * Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.
- * Don't remove mulch from perennials too early. A warm day may make you think spring is almost here but there may be more cold weather yet to come.
- * Order gladiolus corms now for planting later in the spring after all danger of frost has passed. Locate in full sun in well drained soil.
- * Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, quince, spirea, and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about 3 weeks.
- * Late winter is the time to prune many deciduous trees. Look over your plants now and remove dead, dying, or unsightly parts of the tree, sprouts growing at or near the base of the tree trunk and crossed branches.
- * If bird feeding has been a favorite activity this winter, order trees and shrubs which provide cover and small fruits for your feathered friends. Consider species such as crabapple and hawthorn which can help lure hungry birds from cultivated fruits, if planted on the opposite side of the yard.
- * Check any vegetables you have in storage. Dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.
- * This year plan to grow at least one new vegetable that you've never grown before; it may be better than what you are already growing. The new dwarf varieties on the market which use less space while producing more food per square foot may be just what you're looking for.
- * Send off seed orders early this month to take advantage of seasonal discounts. Some companies offer bonus seeds of new varieties to early buyers.
- * Don't start your vegetable plants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast growth species such as cabbage. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slower growing types such as peppers.
- * Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the worst of the winter cold is passed but before spring growth begins.

* Fertilize fruit trees as soon as possible after the ground thaws but before blossom time.

* Late February is a good time to air layer such house plants as dracaena, dieffenbachia and rubber plant, especially if they have grown too tall and leggy.

* Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture, and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

* Repair and paint window boxes, lawn furniture, tools and other items in preparation for outdoor gardening and recreational use.