

# **Parker County Master Gardener Association**

## **Garden Tips - January**

### **General yard:**

Annual soil tests are a great way to monitor nutrient accumulations in your landscape. Have the soil test done and follow the recommended guidelines.

Make flower and vegetable garden plans now before the rush of spring planting. Prepare beds and garden area for spring planting. Apply mulch, compost or shredded tree leaves to moderate soil temperature fluctuations.

Now is an excellent time to transplant mature or established trees and shrubs while they are dormant. Root stimulator should be applied when planting new trees or shrubs and be applied every month for the first year.

When buying plants, the biggest is not always the best, especially when dealing with bare-root plants. Medium to small size trees (4 to 6 feet) are usually faster to become established and more effective in the landscape than the large sizes.

Be on the lookout for scale insects on camellias, euonymus, hollies, photinia, fruit and shade trees.

Water foliage plants as well as other containerized plants only when needed and not by the calendar.

### **Lawn:**

During a warm spell use a broad-leaved weed killer as needed to eliminate clover, chickweed, henbit, dandelions and other non-grassy weeds.

### **Flowers:**

Finish planting spring bulbs early in month, including daffodils, also pre-chilled tulips and hyacinths.

Select and order gladiolus corms for February/March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.

Sow seed in flats or containers to get a jump on plant growth before hot weather arrives. Petunias, begonias and impatiens should be sown in early January. Warm temperature plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, marigolds and periwinkles, (seeds) should be sown in late January or early February.

Apply a light application of fertilizer to established pansy and viola plantings. Use one-half pound of ammonium sulfate per 100 square feet of bed area. Repeat the application every 4 to 6 weeks, depending on rainfall. Dried blood meal can also be used as fertilizer for pansies/violas.

### **Fruit & Nut:**

Plant fruit, pecan trees, grapes and berries. Choose only adapted varieties for this area. Check Texas references or contact your county Texas Extension Office.

Prune new peach and plum trees by half. Encourage 3 or 4 "scaffold" branches to arise from trunk between 24 and 28 inches from ground. Then prune each year to remove strongly vertical branches.

### **Vegetables:**

Plant asparagus roots as early as they are offered. Buy 2 year-old roots and plant into well-prepared garden soil where plants can grow for many years. Use a high-nitrogen fertilizer late in the month to encourage new asparagus shoots (in an established bed).

### **Trees & Shrubs:**

Remove mistletoe while it is still young. Clip small twigs on which it is growing. There is no spray that will control it without harming the host tree.

If you want to allow more sunlight under trees, now is the time to remove lower limbs (December – February). Oak trees should not be trimmed after February 15th or before the first of December.

Check junipers and other narrow-leaf evergreens for bagworm pouches. The insect eggs overwinter in the pouch, and starts the cycle again by emerging in the spring to begin feeding on the foliage. Hand removal and burning of the pouches are ways of reducing the potential damage in the spring.

When pruning shrubs, first prune out any dead or damaged branches, then thin out (if needed) by removing about one-third of the canes or stems at ground level, removing the oldest canes only; and last, shape the rest of the plant, but do not cut everything back to the same height.

### **Roses:**

Hold off on pruning bush roses until February (Valentine's Day is a good marker). Use good shears that will make clean cuts. Remove dead, dying and weak canes. Leave 4 to 8 healthy canes and remove approximately one-half of the top growth and height of the plant.

Climbing roses should be trained but not pruned. Weave long canes through openings in trellises or arbors and tie them with jute twine or plastic/wire plant ties. Securing canes now prevents damage from winter winds and contributes toward a more refined look to the garden when roses are blooming. Wait until after the spring flowering period to prune climbing or once-blooming shrub roses. Prune grape plants by 80 percent or more. Train vines along horizontal wire supports and maintain canes on permanent trellises or wires.

Now is an excellent time to select and plant container-grown roses to fill in those bare spots in your rose garden.