

FEBRUARY GARDEN CHECKLIST



Camellia

Clean Up: Continue clean-up of beds of dying foliage, sticks and leaves.

Cut Back: Now is the time to cut back ornamental grasses like liriope and mondo grass before new leaves emerge. Cut small plants by hand; for larger ones, use your lawn mower with the blade set at 2 ½ to 3 inches high. Most perennials can also be cut back now, including coreopsis, asters, phlox, black-eyed Susans, and bee-balm. Do not cut back perennial salvia or 'Miss Huff' lantana (or other perennial lantana) until you see new, green growth sprouting.

Prune hybrid tea roses and shrub roses in February. A good rule of thumb for rose pruning is always to cut back to an outward-facing bud. That means that the bud is on the side of a stem facing away from the center of the plant. When the bud sprouts, it will grow away from the center of the plant. This keeps air moving around and through a rose plant, which decreases the risk of black spot. Most climbing roses flower on old growth from the previous year, so do not prune those until after they flower.

Lawn: Apply a pre-emergence broadleaf herbicide. By being proactive now you'll prevent weeds from invading come spring.

Vegetable Garden: Begin planting cool season vegetables outside in the garden. In mid to late February, you can plant lettuces, radishes, carrots, peas, and other cool-season vegetables directly into your garden. Plant carrots and radishes together. Carrots can take a while to sprout, and radishes keep the soil from crusting over. Use a lightweight potting soil or seed starting mix to cover lettuce seeds. These plants sprout most easily through this lightweight soil.

Start seeds: Warm-season annual flower and vegetable seeds can be started indoors. Tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, coleus, marigolds, salvia, zinnias, ageratum, and flowering tobacco need between 4-8 weeks to grow to the point where they can be transplanted outside. Use seed-starting mix to start your seeds. These are specially formulated mixes that are lighter in weight and better for newly emerging seeds. Keep the mix moist while the seeds are sprouting.

Sow: You can sow fragrant sweet peas now. They'll begin germinating while it's still cool, and you'll have lots of flowers in the spring.