

# February

## Yard, Garden & Plant Tips

### Shrubs and trees

- From middle to late February fertilize evergreen shrubs and trees. Use acidic fertilizer for conifers, azaleas, rhododendrons & camellias and water thoroughly.
- Deciduous trees & shrubs that don't have swelled buds can still be moved.
- Vigorously prune summer shrubs that bloom on new wood. This includes beautyberry, althea, abelia, hydrangea, gardenia, crepe myrtle, rose of Sharon, hibiscus and butterfly bush (*Buddleia*).
- Lightly spread wood ashes around lilac bushes to promote more blooms

### Perennials, annuals and bulbs

- After Feb. 15 plant new roses or move old roses.
- Root out exotics like English ivy and Japanese honeysuckle.
- A butterfly garden should be planted where it is sheltered from wind, but a sunny spot for larval plants allows females to lay more eggs.
- When choosing larval food plants check the range of the butterfly being attracted.
- Good native larval plants are parsley, Queen Anne's lace, marigolds, dogwood and tulip poplar.
- Larval plants attract female butterflies, but many are weeds. Choose wisely.
- Plant both perennials like butterfly weed and annuals like zinnias for butterflies.
- Have nectar plants of various heights so smaller butterflies have plenty of species to choose from.

### Fruits and vegetables

- Check seed vitality by wrapping 10 seeds in a wet paper towel inside a baggie and see how many germinate.
- Prepare your vegetable garden by adding well-rotted manure or compost.
- Make a raised covered bed to grow spring lettuce, spinach and onions.
- Plant asparagus, rhubarb, horseradish and onion sets. Sow lettuce seeds every 3 weeks to spread out the harvest.
- Only work the soil when it is dry enough to crumble in your hand.
- Start parsley from seed, it is a biennial and will produce seed during its second year.
- Remove last year's canes from raspberries and blackberries except for everbearers.

### Odds and ends

- Keep birdbaths clean and free of ice.