February

Garden hints from your OSU Extension Faculty

The Oregon State University Extension Service encourages **sustainable gardening practices**.

**Preventative pest management** is emphasized over reactive pest control. Always identify and monitor problems before acting and opt for the least toxic approach that will remedy the problem. The conservation of biological control agents (predators, parasitoids) should be favored over chemical controls.

Use chemical controls only when necessary and only after thoroughly reading the pesticide label. First consider cultural, then physical and biological controls. Choose the least-toxic options (insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic and synthetic pesticides — when used judiciously).

Recommendations in this calendar are not necessarily applicable to all areas of Oregon. For more information, contact your local Extension office at [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us).

**Planning**

- Tune up lawn mower and garden equipment before the busy season begins.
- Have soil tested to determine its nutrient needs. For more information, contact your local Extension office for a list of testing laboratories or view *Laboratories Serving Oregon: Soil, Water, Plant Tissue, and Feed Analysis* (PDF - EM 8677).
- Select and store healthy scion wood for grafting fruit and nut trees. Wrap in damp cloth or peat moss and place in plastic bag. Store in cool place.
- Plan an herb bed for cooking and creating an interesting landscape. For example, choose parsley, sage, chives, and lavender. Choose a sunny spot and plant seeds or transplants once the danger of frost has passed (late-April or early-May in the Willamette Valley and central Coast; June or July in eastern and central Oregon).
- Plan to add herbaceous perennial flowers to your flowering landscape this spring. Examples include candytuft, peony, penstemon, and coneflower.

**Maintenance and Clean Up**

- Make a cold frame or hotbed to start early vegetables or flowers.
- Fertilize rhubarb with manure or a complete fertilizer.
- Incorporate cover crops or other organic matter into soil.
- Prune and train grapes; make cuttings.
- Prune fruit trees and blueberries.
- **Eastern Oregon**: Prune and train summer-bearing and fall-bearing raspberries.
- **Western Oregon**: Prune deciduous summer-blooming shrubs and trees; wait until April in high elevations of eastern and central Oregon.
- **Western Oregon**: Prune and train trailing blackberries (if not done the previous August); prune back raspberries.
- **Western Oregon**: Prune fall-bearing raspberries (in late-February or early-March).
- **Western Oregon**: Prune clematis, Virginia creeper, and other vining ornamentals.
**Planting/Propagation**

- Plant windowsill container gardens of carrots, lettuce, or parsley.
- Plan to add herbaceous perennial flowers this spring: astilbe, candytuft, peony, and anemone.
- Good time to plant fruit trees and deciduous shrubs. Replace varieties of ornamental plants that are susceptible to disease with resistant cultivars.
- Plant asparagus if the ground is warm enough.
- Plant seed flats of cole crops (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts), indoors or in a greenhouse.
  
  **Western Oregon**: Where soil is dry enough and workable, plant garden peas and sweet peas. Suggested varieties of garden peas include: Corvallis, Dark Green Perfection, Green Arrow, Oregon Sugar Pod, Snappy, Knight, Sugar Snap, Oregon Trail, and Oregon Sugar Pod II.

  **Western Oregon**: Good time to plant new roses.

**Pest Monitoring and Management**

- Monitor landscape plants for problems. Don’t treat unless a problem is identified.
- Use delayed-dormant sprays of lime sulfur for fruit and deciduous trees and shrubs.
- Remove cankered limbs from fruit and nut trees for control of diseases such as apple anthracnose, bacterial canker of stone fruit and Eastern filbert blight. Sterilize tools before each new cut.
- Control moles and gophers with traps.
- **Western Oregon**: Elm leaf beetles and box-elder bugs are emerging from hibernation and may be seen indoors. They are not harmful, but can be a nuisance. Remove them with a vacuum or broom and dustpan.

**Houseplants and Indoor Gardening**

- Pasteurize soil for starting seedlings in pots or flats, or use clean, sterile commercial mixes.
- **Central Oregon**: Gather branches of quince, forsythia, and flowering cherries; bring indoors to force early bloom.

Trade-name products and services are mentioned as illustrations only. This does not mean that the Oregon State University Extension Service endorses these products and services or intends to discriminate against products and services not mentioned.

For additional OSU Extension gardening information, visit: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening