

Gardening in Asotin County January – February – March



January is a planning month in the valley. Think about making your garden more interesting for next winter: include plants that offer unusual tree forms, bark textures, persistent berries and seed heads in your plans this year. Include vegetables if you have not done so before or alternately plan for flowers that attract wildlife.

Vegetables and annual flowers need to be planted on a schedule. Frost-hardy and cool-season plants can be seeded outdoors or started much earlier than warm-season plants. Consult seed catalogs, gardening books and Extension publications for seeding and transplanting schedules and be ready with a plan.

Brush heavy accumulated snow from the limbs on your shrubs with gentle upward sweeping motions.

Avoid walking over the same areas of frozen lawn or you may find bald spots there in the spring. A frozen lawn is not impervious to damage.

Oil sprays take care of many over wintering pests including scale, insects, aphids and some mite problems. On fruit trees, the best time to apply oil sprays is just before the buds are ready to open. Spray when plants are dormant and the temperature is above freezing.

Add manure or compost to your soil as soon as the soil is workable.

Get notes started in your journal and use it all year. You will be amazed at how much the information that you record this year, will benefit you next year. Write down what perennials bloom together and how long they bloom. Start planning planting schedules for vegetables and annuals. Record plant and tree varieties in your journal as you plant them. Tag and record the colors and types of bulbs that bloom for later reference after flowers have died.

You can still do some winter pruning of fruit trees and/or deciduous hedges. It is also a good idea to remove any blown-in leaves and debris from your yard and from around shrubs to minimize diseases. Branches bent from heavy frost or snow should be righted as soon as possible.

March is when it all begins in the valley. Plant onion sets, shallots, flowering perennials, herbs, landscape trees and shrubs, berry plants and fruit trees. Buy good stock at reputable nurseries and get planting advice from nursery personnel or WSU Extension Master Gardeners.

Treat lawns for crabgrass and other weeds in **February**. The germination of weed seeds can be controlled with use of pre-emergent weed killers. Timing is important.

You can now seed or sod a new lawn. Newly seeded lawns may take two or more weeks to germinate. Seed will germinate more slowly in cold weather, but will not be damaged by cold temperatures.

Rake needles and leaves off lawns to prevent suffocation and mold. When weather conditions permit, rake and aerate your lawn.

Remove protective mulches from roses, clematis, azaleas and other tender shrubs.

Cultivate garden beds as soon as soil is dry enough to work. Roots need loose soil twelve inches deep. Mix in a few inches of peat moss or organic material, or up to 2 inches of compost. Plant peas in **March**.

Transplant trees and shrubs.

Cut all rose canes except climbers to about six inches above ground level. Cut back winter-killed rose canes to one inch below the blackened area. If you find consistent winter damage, you might consider planting some shrub roses that have their own roots, not grafted.