



# Virginia Cooperative Extension - Loudoun County Master Gardeners



## Helpline Hints for March – the Month that Begins the Gardening Season

| Flowers   | Garden  | Lawn  | Trees / Shrubs  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fertilize bulbs after blooming with balanced fertilizer or a mixture of bonemeal and dehydrated cow manure</li> <li>• Fertilize perennials as they start to grow; especially heavy feeders like astilbes, daylilies and peonies with 5-10-5 organic fertilizer or aged manure</li> <li>• Divide perennials as needed</li> <li>• Cut-back grasses, coneflowers, sedum heads, lirioppe, evergreen ferns, and other perennials</li> <li>• Prune roses and fertilize</li> <li>• Direct sow <u>hardy</u> flowers like poppies, larkspurs and sweet peas</li> <li>• Plant ground covers and perennials</li> <li>• Prune hybrid tea roses to the 3 to 4 strongest canes to form a “vase” shape</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As soon as ground thaws and is dry enough, start tilling or turning beds. Add compost, balanced fertilizer, or manure.</li> <li>• Check for any over-wintering diseases or pests and remove</li> <li>• Plant bare-root berry bushes, strawberries, fruit trees, grapevines, asparagus</li> <li>• Prune established berry bushes and grapevines</li> <li>• Remove winter mulch from strawberry plants when growth starts, but keep some for frost protection</li> <li>• Direct sow cool-season plants (beets, carrots, broad beans, mustard, peas, spinach, arugula)</li> <li>• Transplant seedlings of cabbage and broccoli after hardening them off</li> <li>• Fertilize established plants with balanced organic fertilizer</li> <li>• Check for cutworms; if present place collars on plants</li> <li>• Do <u>not</u> add wood ashes now as it burns the new seeds</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove debris, aerate and / or dethatch when soil is dry enough</li> <li>• Plant grass seed or plugs for new yards or restore existing ones; keep moist until established</li> <li>• Control Japanese beetles with milky spore or parasitic nematodes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prune evergreen hedges (keep base wider than top), shrubs, and trees before growth starts; prune deciduous shrubs and trees before growth starts; remove all dead or diseased branches and do not compost or keep in yard</li> <li>• Put organic fertilizer on shrubs and trees if there are any signs of stress, slow growth, or poor leaf color (do <u>not</u> fertilize one year old trees)</li> <li>• Prune flowering shrubs and trees after bloom</li> <li>• Plant and / or transplant shrubs and trees; mulch around base for protection (but keep mulch 2-3” from base)</li> <li>• Check for overwintering insects and diseases; apply dormant oil if needed</li> <li>• Check for any bagworms you might have missed in the fall</li> </ul> |

*If you haven't had a soil test in the last three years, stop by the Loudoun County Extension Office for a kit . . . or contact the Loudoun County Master Gardener Helpline with your questions – 703 771-5150 or [ex107@vt.edu](mailto:ex107@vt.edu).*