

Garden Line - February 2010

by Brent Moon - HPARD Urban Garden Manager

Hopefully the last vestiges of winter will soon be behind us and we can start thinking about spring. February is usually the month when we start seeing a bit of a warm up, if not by mid-month, then at least by the end of the month. Hopefully you had a nice winter's rest and are ready for all the work, and fun, that spring brings.



Late February is a good time to put out pre-emergent weed products in your lawn and landscape, if you are into those sorts of things. I have done it in the past, but I have heard that the active ingredient in these pre-emergents is hard on the roots of our woody shrubs and trees. I may not put out the traditional weed and feed this year and just do a low rate of fertilizer on my lawn.

Now is a good time to add a nice layer of compost to your landscape and vegetable garden. If you put it in your landscape, simply mulch over it later; however, till it in lightly if applying to your vegetable garden. Your plants will thank you for this great additive to your soil all season long.

Don't forget that if you want to have a successful tomato crop, you'll want to get your tomato transplants in the ground this month for best results. For more details on successful tomato growing, see my article from February of 2009 in the archives.



February is also a great time to consider planting citrus trees. They are very low maintenance and will reward you with fruit for many years to come, once they are well-established. There are several fruit tree sales around Houston this time of year. For more information on growing citrus in our area, go to www.urbanharvest.org.



Other things to do in your garden/landscape this month include:

- Transplanting dormant trees, shrubs, and vines
 - Cut back roses, grapevines, and certain other flowering shrubs (do not cut back spring bloomers now or you'll remove their flower buds)
 - Continue to sow cool season crops such as radishes, lettuce, carrots, kohlrabi, beets, Swiss chard, spinach, etc.
- Sow Bermuda and buffalo grass seed, lay St. Augustine sod
 - Cut back ornamental grasses to a height of around 6"
 - Make sure your lawnmower and weed eater are operational

