



Betty's Bloomers Nursery

Issue 5

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Hello Groundhogs

Looking at the calendar, Mid February is still considered Winter. However, we all know in Southeast Texas calendars can seem to be wrong. We also know that weather changes fast here. Those warm sunny days that make fruit trees & azaleas pop with color also makes us want to get started on our spring gardening. There are some things you can do help you with that planting itch. You can plant shrubs trees, roses, cool weather annuals and potatoes, onions, & lettuce seed.

Grower tips

A new rose bed can be an asset to any garden with flowers virtually year round. However, there are some mandatory requirements for growing roses that will ensure success. The best place to plant a rose is in an open area that receives at least 6 hours of direct sunlight and allows air movement around each plant. Prepare the soil by adding a good organic material such as composted bark. This will loosen heavy clay soils or enrich sandy soils. Sand can be added to heavy clay soils to help loosen it. Planting roses in raised bed also helps control too much moisture during rainy seasons. Set the plants the same level at which it is growing in the pot. If it is a grafted rose bush, do not cover the graft. Water in well to eliminate any air pockets in the soil and add a thick layer of mulch twice

a year. Give them a good soaking every 5-7 days during dry seasons. A soaker hose run for several hours at a time works well to minimize evaporation and to keep the leaves dry. Use a good commercial rose food or organic fertilizer and follow directions on the package. Make sure you water in thoroughly to dissolve the fertilizer into a form the rose can use and to clean any residue off surrounding foliage.

What's in Season?

Cool-season annuals such as petunia snapdragons, stock and flowering tobacco can be set out now. They will tolerate a light freeze and they need to get established before warmer weather is here. Fill empty pots with geraniums, gerber daisies, & dianthus. Keeping the old blooms "dead-headed" will encourage more blooms.

Choose the right color azaleas for your yard now as they begin to bloom. Plant azaleas in a partial shade area avoiding the hot afternoon sun. Add plenty of composted humus to the soil and keep the soil moist the first year after planting.

To get a head start on growing tomatoes, transplant seedling into a larger pot. Give them lots of sunshine, water and fertilizer for strong plants. Remember to bring them indoors to protect from temperatures dipping into the 30's.

To Do List:

Wait for plants to start greening up before fertilizing. Fertilizing the lawn now, before it actually starts growing, only feed the winter weeds that are growing. Spray winter weed with a broad leaf weed killer such as Weed-Be-Gone now and again in a few weeks. Be sure to follow label directions carefully. If you have problems with annual weeds that reseed every year, broadcast a pre-emergent weed killer now.

Prune back established hybrid tea & everblooming rose bushes now. Remove any dead or weak wood and shorten healthy canes to 18" or 24". Make cuts at a 45 degree angle above outwardly facing leaf buds. Prune climbers & shrub roses after their Spring display.

Something Extra

Everyone needs to know about the gardeners "secret weapon" - Epsom salt- This inexpensive chemical added to the soil helps to balance the PH making fertilizers work better, and makes plants more disease resistant. Mixing 1 tablespoon in a gallon of soapy water is insecticidal soap which can control many types of insects. Sprinkled around the base of fruit trees and tomato bushes when flowering will help set fruit. Not to mention after a hard day working in the garden, add it to your bath water to soak away aching, sore muscles.

HAPPY GARDENING!