# MONTHLY GARDEN CHORES—FEBRUARY

February gardens are in a state of transition. Blooming fruit trees and early spring bulbs signal new life around the corner. But soggy soil combined with still cool temps keep planting to a minimum. Here’s what needs attention:

FRUIT TREES AND SHRUBS:

* Finish pruning dormant trees, removing dead or damaged limbs.
* If your peach tree is still dormant, apply one last dormant fungicide spray to control peach leaf curl.
* Gently prune fuchsias to shape them before they leaf out.

PESTS AND DISEASES:

* Control aphids on tender, new growth by spraying colonies with strong streams of water.
* Trap earwigs overnight in loosely rolled newspapers, then toss in the trash.
* Pull weeds now before they form flowers and seeds.
* Control camellia blight by cleaning up fallen leaves and blooms.

FERTILIZING:

* Feed fruit trees with a balanced fertilizer.
* Fertilize groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and trees with materials that release nutrients slowly, such as bone meal, cottonseed meal or well-composed manure. Work into the top three inches of soil.
* Do not feed native or Mediterranean plants.
* Fertilize after rain to prevent fertilizer from washing into storm drains and creeks.

PLANTING:

* Plant bare root fruit and nut trees and berries early in the month.
* Plant garlic, shallots, bulb onion sets and potatoes.
* Transplant artichoke crowns, asparagus crowns and rhubarb rhizomes.
* In South County, sow cool weather crops such as beets, carrots, lettuce, parsley and snow peas directly in the soil. In North County, start seeds indoors or in cold frames for transplanting when temperatures rise.
* Sow alyssum, achillea, aster, calendula, candytuft, clarkia, coreopsis columbine, cosmos, Shasta daisy, delphinium, hollyhock, lupine, marigold, nasturtium, California poppies and native wildflower seeds.
* Plant bulbs for spring and early summer blooms: amaryllis, caladium, canna, dahlia, daylily, bearded and Dutch iris, gladiolus and tuberose.
* Plant tuberous begonias in small peat pots. Save some bulbs in a cool dry place to plant in 4 weeks to extend your blooming season.

References:

UC ANR Publication 7404, Aphids

UC ANR Publication 74102, Earwigs

UC ANR Publication 7426, Peach Leaf Curl

UC ANR Publication 8057, Training and Pruning Deciduous Trees