

What to do in February.

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Q: What should I be doing in my yard and garden this time of year?

When we get a break in the rains this is a good time to get your trees and shrubs ready for spring. Late winter is the best time to prune grapes, roses, crepe myrtle and any fruit trees that have not bloomed yet. You may also want to cut back any dormant grasses or perennial plants that have not already been cut back.

This is also a good time to paint the trunks of newly planted trees and to repaint the trunks of young trees to prevent borers and protect from sunburn. Sunburn is the number one cause of much of the damage I see to trees around Redding. To paint, use interior white latex paint with equal amounts of water and apply generously.

Now is the time to control slugs, earwigs and sow bugs with bait or traps before you plan to set out yummy young seedlings. By getting the populations under control now you will not be losing plants to these pests later in the season. Make sure to use baits that are not toxic to pets.

Remove and discard old flowers from azaleas and camellias to reduce petal blight, cleaning up around these shrubs after bloom will help control fungal infections. Roses also benefit from this sort of attention, if they have not already been pruned back.

Divide perennials such as asters, lilies, perennial phlox, and chrysanthemums, by dividing you will rejuvenate the plants and also have plants to share with fellow gardener or plant in other places in you yard.

Late February is a good time to fertilized Daphne, after bloom, and asparagus, strawberries and apply the first fertilizer to cane berries. For cane berries, you want to split yearly recommended amount into three applications, just before new growth, mid-spring and mid-summer.

If the rains let up, you may have time to get in one last dormant Spray: Check the California Backyard Orchard website (<http://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/>) for specific information on your trees. But rule of thumb is to spray all fruit and nut trees, if not done in January, before bud swell.

Apricot trees should be sprayed with a fungicide containing copper to prevent brown rot. Spray at bud swell, full bloom, and petal fall.

Remember if you plan to add to your orchard or yard, this is the time that Bare-root deciduous shrubs and trees are available so check your local nurseries to get the best selection.