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# Ventura County Master Gardener Monthly Checklist

## February

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### CALIFORNIA NATIVES

- ✓ Usually, February is our rainiest month. If there are several weeks without rain, it's time to water.
- ✓ There is no need to fertilize natives, but they may like some mulch. Useful information about native plants, mulch, and other topics is available in this month's newsletter. [Click here to link to it on our website](#) or sign up to receive it monthly by [clicking here](#).
- ✓ Read up on natives at <https://www.calscape.org/>
- ✓ It is still a good time to plant native flowers for Spring bloom. Come to our [plant sale on March 1](#), 10am – 2pm at Calleguas MWD in Thousand Oaks. There will be California native plants for sale, as well as planting demonstrations and informative presentations..

### GROWING FOOD

- ✓ Continue to plant asparagus, beets, carrots, cabbage family, lettuce, horseradish, rhubarb, strawberries.
- ✓ Herbs to plant: bay leaf, borage, chives, parsley, rosemary, and French thyme. Come to our class on growing herbs, [Mastering Mediterranean Herbs on February 6](#), in Simi Valley.
- ✓ Time to plant deciduous fruit trees [https://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/The\\_Big\\_Picture/Tree\\_Selection/](https://homeorchard.ucanr.edu/The_Big_Picture/Tree_Selection/)
- ✓ Blackberries are native to CA. Beware blackberries are a long-term commitment, and they do need a lot of water. They need structure to grow on and can grow up to 16 feet. Nothing beats a summer blackberry pie!
- ✓ Berries and grapevines can be planted.
- ✓ Strawberries can be planted bare root this time of year which makes them very affordable. They appreciate mulch to grow their fruit on. <https://cagardenweb.ucanr.edu/Berries/Strawberries/>
- ✓ Not sure how to get started? [Try this Vegetable Gardening Fundamentals class in Thousand Oaks](#), or one of the many food growing classes we offer this month. [See the list here](#).

### PLANTS AND FLOWERS

- ✓ Plant annual seeds: alyssum, aster, cornflower, calendula, carnation, coreopsis, columbine, cosmos, delphinium, forget-me-nots, hollyhock, impatiens, lobelia, lupine, marigold, pansies, petunia, violas, and native wildflowers.
- ✓ Spring bulbs can still be planted this month.
- ✓ Plant bare root roses, ask your nursery about drought-resistant options.

### TREES & SHRUBS

- ✓ Fruit trees good for mild coastal climates are apples, apricots, nectarine, peach, persimmon, plum and pomegranate. Be sure to check with your local nursery about which type will grow best in your type of soil.
- ✓ Prune mature trees and shrubs. Don't prune if blossoms have started growing or you might miss out on spring color.

## TOOL CARE

- ✓ Clean and sanitize tools, all metal parts (sharpen or replace blades)
- ✓ Rub wooden handles with linseed oil. Store in dry place.

## INSECTS, PESTS & WEEDS

- ✓ Control slugs and snails.
- ✓ Treat aphids with a blast of water. If you use insecticidal soap or neem oil, be sure to follow the label directions.
- ✓ Earwigs can damage young plants but are also a predator to aphids. Read more about them in this month's newsletter.
- ✓ If it looks like a weed pull it. Wait several days after rain to do any weeding to avoid compacting wet soil.
- ✓ Visit [www.CaliforniaCitrusThreat.org](http://www.CaliforniaCitrusThreat.org) for information on HLB and the ACP pest
- ✓ White alyssum is a host plant for the beneficial hoverfly. Planting it near citrus may help in controlling the insect that vectors the deadly HLB disease.
- ✓ For all pest advice - Visit [www.ipm.ucanr.edu](http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu)

## WATER, AIR, SOIL, & FIRE

- ✓ Turn down water and irrigation. Check your soil moisture before you water. Irrigate less frequently. Shorter days and cooler weather mean that your plants won't be taking up as much water. You will want to apply the same amount of water as usual but you will be watering much less often.
- ✓ Turn down or turn off irrigation if rain is forecast. Turn off for large rains or consider a rain sensor that can be added to newer irrigation controllers.
- ✓ Take a free Drip Irrigation class at Calleguas MWD in Thousand Oaks on February 8<sup>th</sup>. [Click here to register.](#)
- ✓ Take your indoor plants outside for a good soak in the rain.
- ✓ It's not too late to spread manure, compost, and mulch throughout your garden to jump start spring growth.
- ✓ Always weed, mulch, and water if it's a dry winter.
- ✓ For a safer landscape during fire season, (that's all year now) clean out any debris that has collected under shrubs, trees and any nooks around your house. Prune any deadwood out of trees and shrubs.
- ✓ Join us at this Firewise Living: from Structure to Landscape workshop in Ventura February 15. [Click here for more information and registration.](#)