



## Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



### February 2021

Have you opened any of your spring garden catalogs yet to see what is new, what colors have been added, what varieties are being offered, which are deer resistant? Why not sit back with one tonight with a cup of cocoa and dream about what you may wish to add to your gardens this year.

February is a quiet month for gardeners but there are a few things you can do for yourself to get a jump start on spring. Look over your garden/seed catalogues for new and exciting vegetable varieties to try in the garden and order as early as possible for best selection. Plan out and design your vegetable garden remembering to implement crop rotation of vegetable families to reduce disease buildup. Plan on what to grow, spacing, arrangement, and number of plants needed.

Use deicing compounds sparingly to avoid salt damage to landscape plants.

If you have stored bulbs, check the bulb's condition to ensure they are firm, removing any soft or rotten bulbs.

Repot houseplants as they outgrow current pots. If you see roots when you look at the drainage hole in the bottom of the pot, chances are it's time.

Use your hand or a broom to gently brush away any heavy snow that may accumulate on shrubs before it freezes. Heavy snow can weigh down branches, causing them to break or become misshapen.

Fertilize spring flowering bulbs as they break ground by using an all-purpose granular fertilizer according to label directions, or apply a light dusting of compost. Trees that weren't fed last fall should be deep fed by punching a series of 1-2-inch holes two feet apart around the drip line and filled with fertilizer. Mid to late February is the time to fertilize shrubs and evergreens. Use an acid type Rhododendron fertilizer to feed evergreens, conifers, broad leaf evergreens, rhododendrons, azaleas, and camellias. Use an all-purpose fertilizer to feed roses and other deciduous trees and shrubs. If you use granular type fertilizers, be sure to water it in thoroughly or apply just before a good rain.

During thaws, check perennials and shrubs that were planted last year to make sure the root balls are not heaving out of the ground. Tamp them back down if they are. Freezes and thaws can push poorly rooted plants out of the ground, exposing roots to potentially fatal winter winds.

**Reapply anti-desiccant sprays such as *Wilt Pruf* to broad leaf evergreens that are prone to browning around the edges from cold winter winds. Apply only during above 40-degree days. Also reapply deer repellents to landscape plants that are prime deer targets.**

**Prune your fruit trees and young shade trees, especially bleeders such as maple, birch and dogwood that will produce a lot of sap if you wait until later in spring. Apply dormant oil spray to the fruit trees after pruning only on above 40-degree days.**

**Take cuttings from geraniums, coleus, and any other annuals you've overwintered inside to make babies for this spring. Dip cuttings in a rooting hormone, stick them in quality potting mix and put under plant lights or a southern exposure window.**

**Check your hellebores for leaf spot (rounded brown spots on the leaves) and remove any leaves that are affected.**

**Prune summer flowering shrubs now but be aware that spring bloomers have already produced their buds last fall, and pruning them now will result in the loss of flowers. Forsythia, quince, spirea and other early spring flowering shrubs should be pruned a little later, after they have finished flowering.**

**Now that was quite a long task list, but it's good to get outside on warmer, sunny days. We all need the extra vitamin D!**



**--Sandy**